Kathmandu

A LIVING HERITAGE

Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana

Photographs: Vivek Anand

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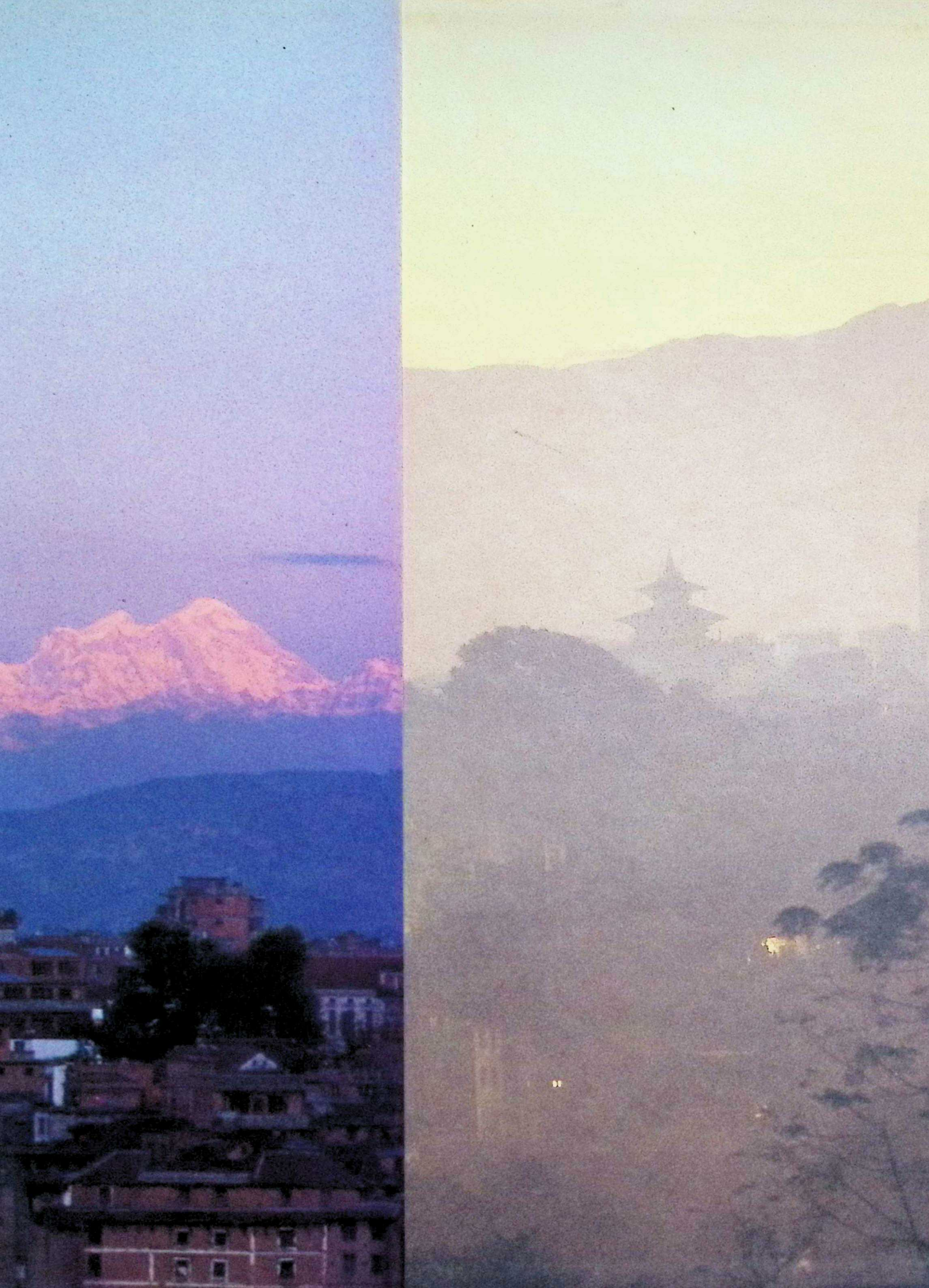

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Kathmandu

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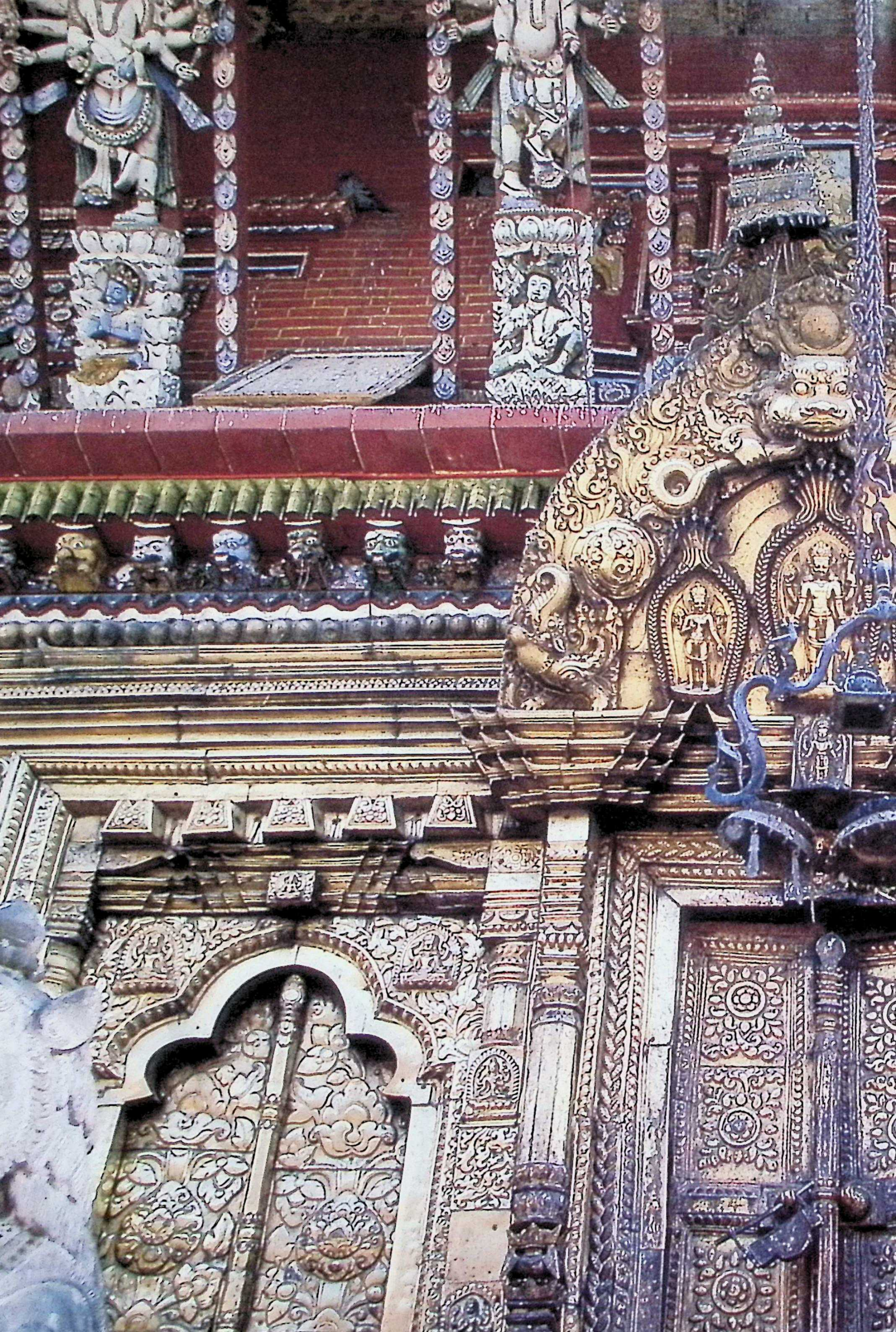
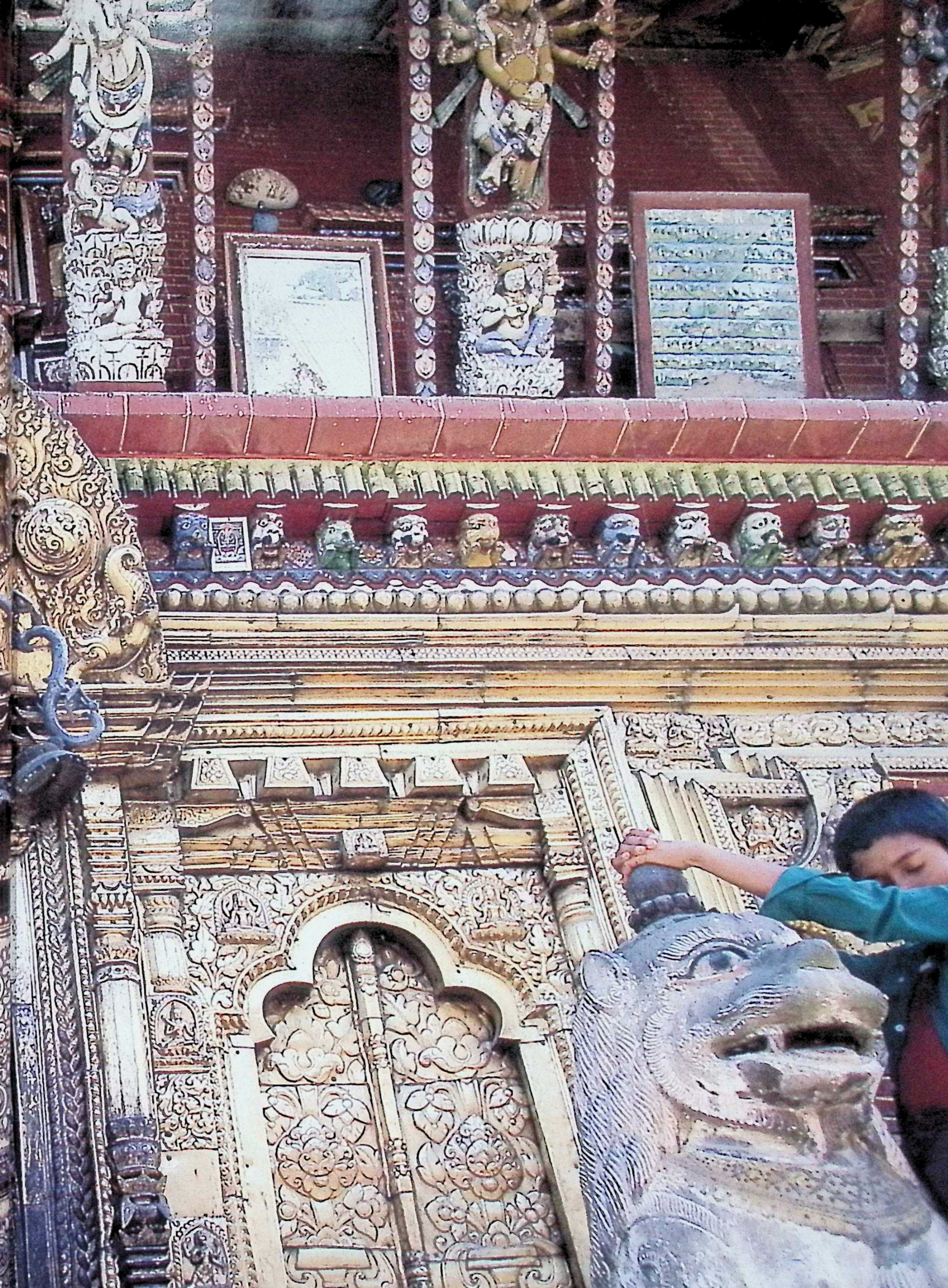
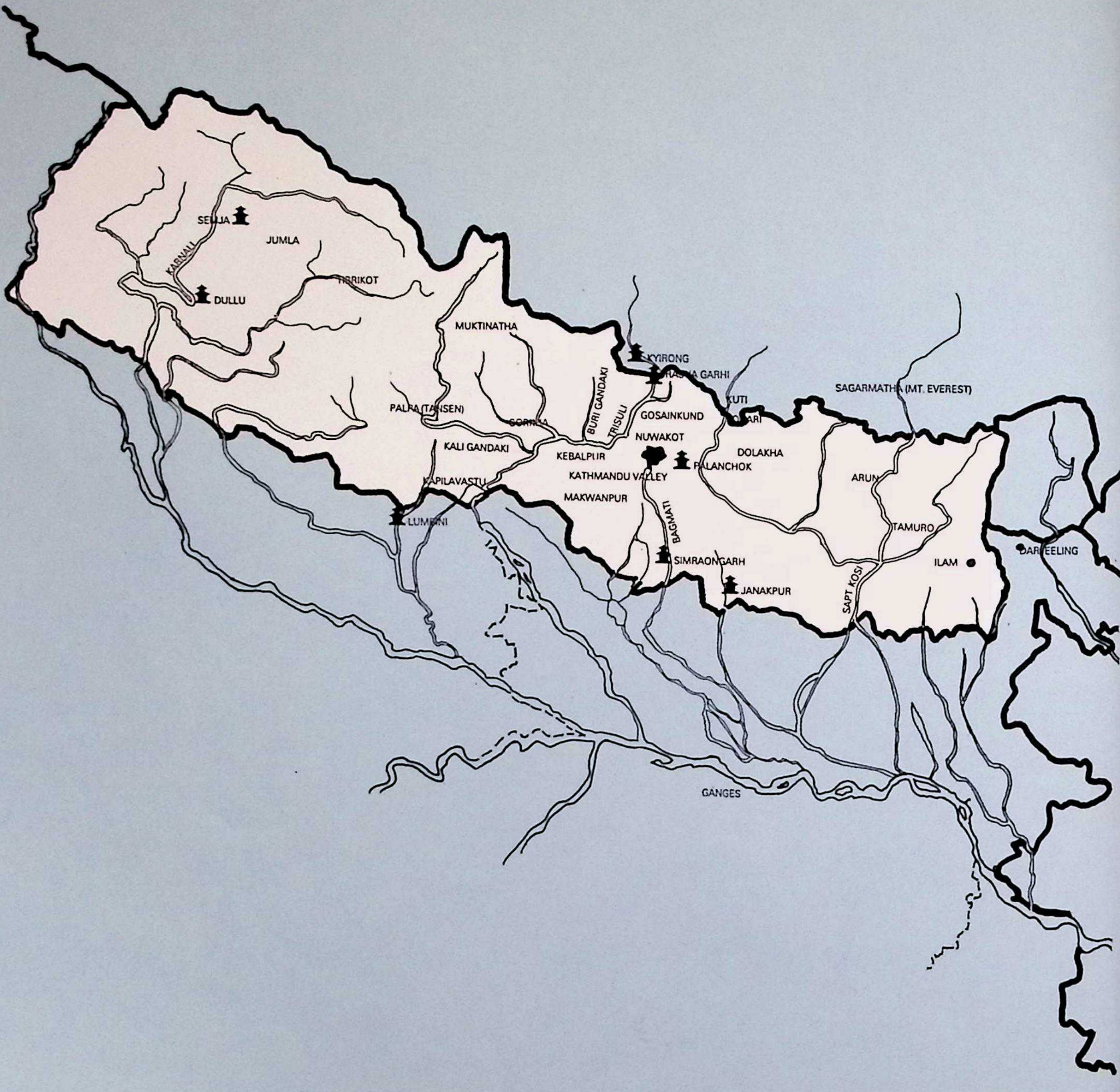
This book is dedicated to
His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva
of Nepal in tribute to
the unstinting patronage that His Majesty has provided
for the process of restoration and conservation
of the cultural heritage of the nation.





Map of Nepal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GOSAINKUND
PALPA (TANSEN)
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NUWAKOT
DOLAKHA
KALI GANDAKI
KEBALPUR
PALANCHOK
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MAKWANPUR
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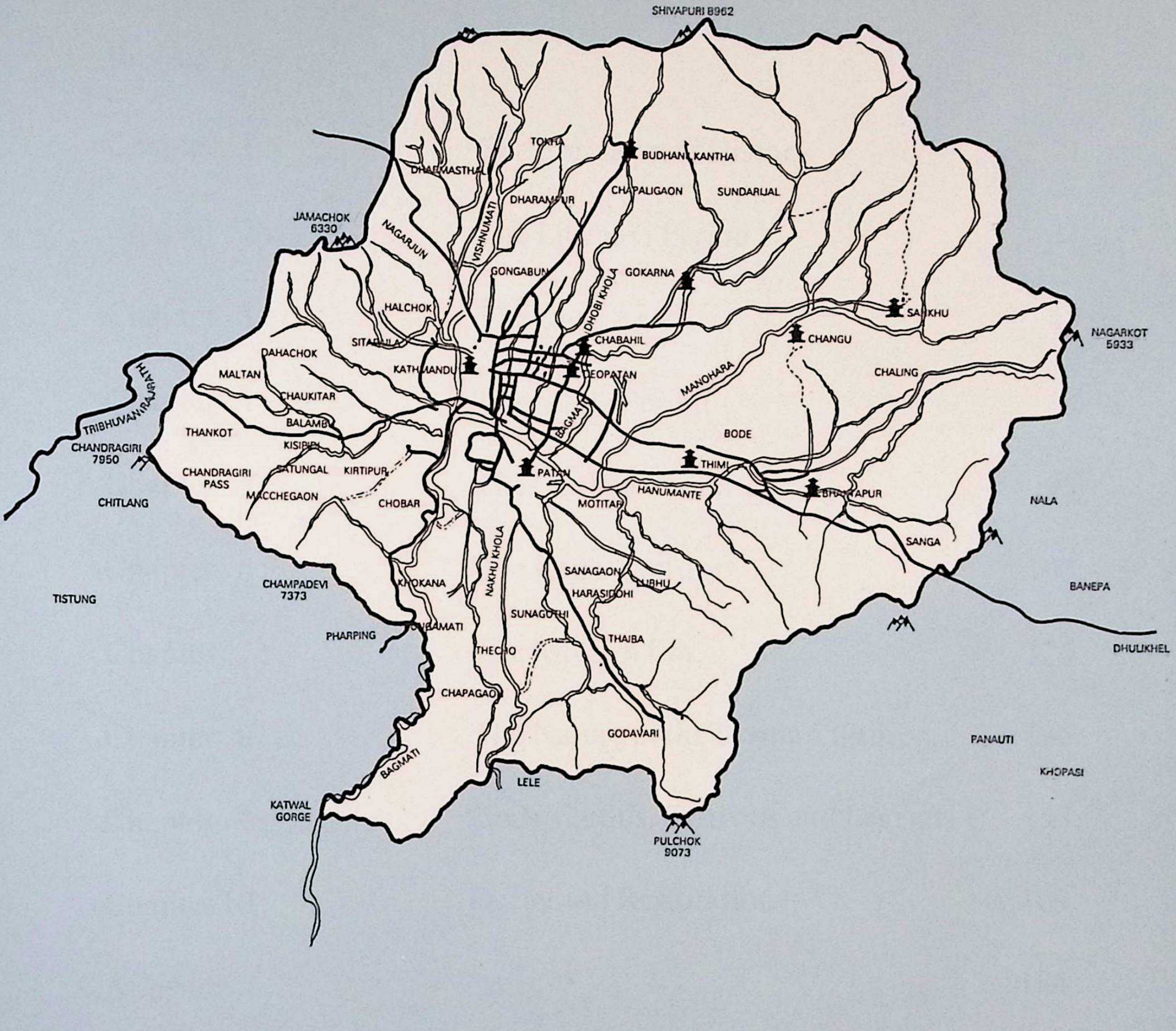
The Kathmandu Valley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Contents

Preface 17

Chapter 1 : The Pre-dawn of History 21

Chapter 2 : The Licchavi Period 31

Chapter 3 : The Dark Ages 47

Chapter 4 : The Malla Period 63

Chapter 5 : The Gorkha Period 93

Chapter 6 : The Rana Century 105

Chapter 7 : The Modern Era 123

Chapter 8 : The Nature of the Living Culture 135

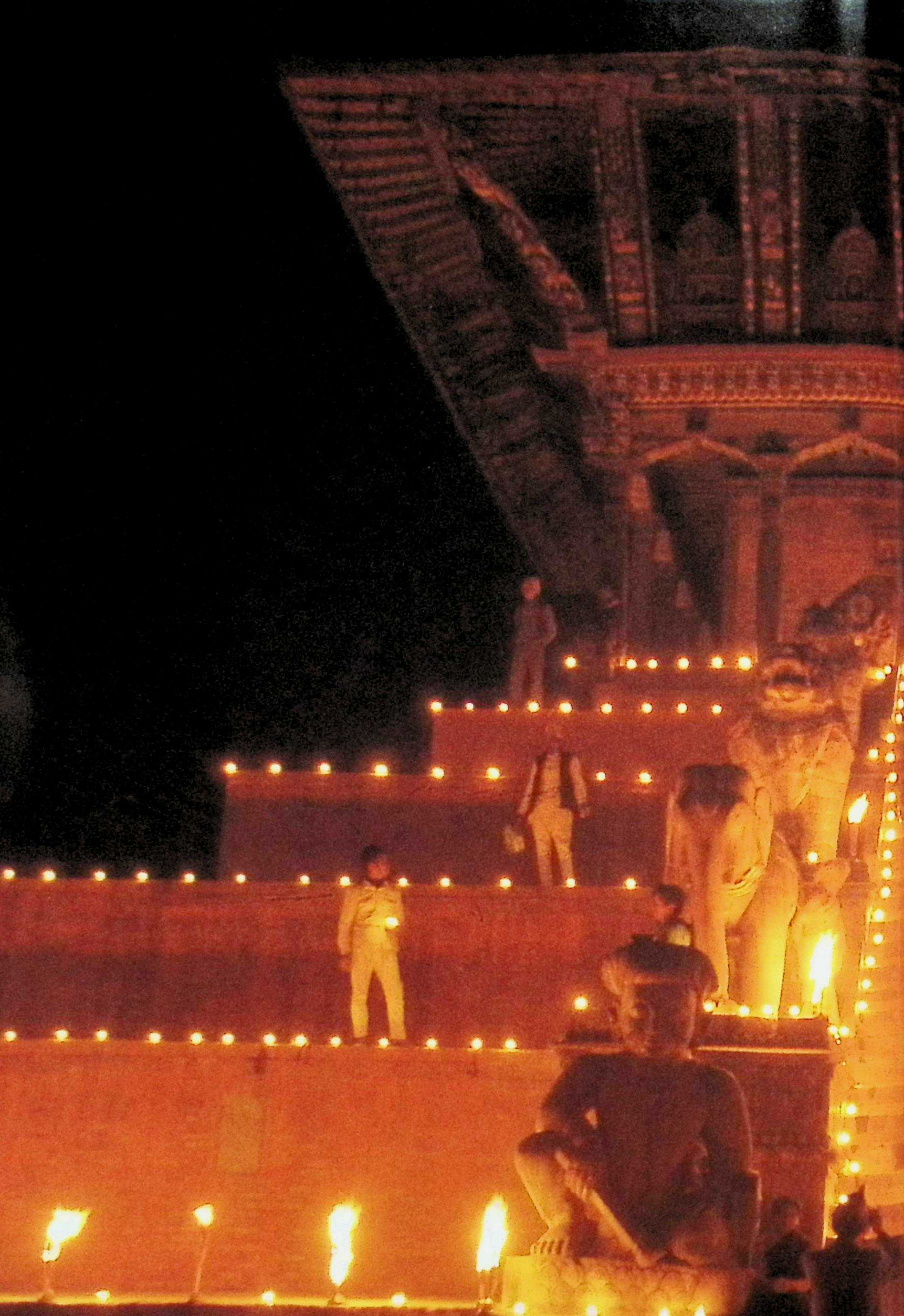
Chapter 9 : Gods, Guthis, Festivals and Legends 153

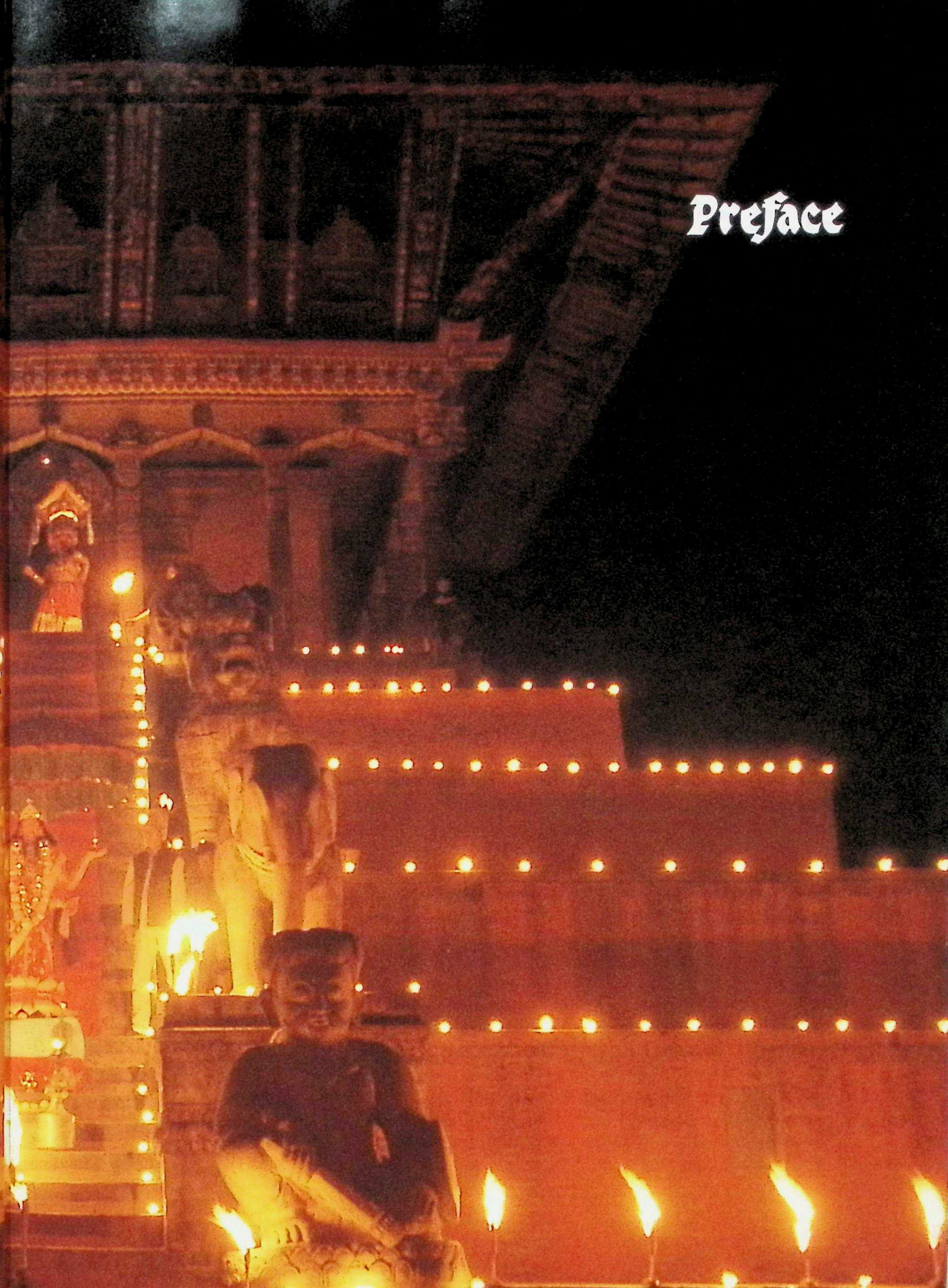
Chapter 10 : Decay and Restoration 169

Appendix : 184

Footnotes to Chapters 224

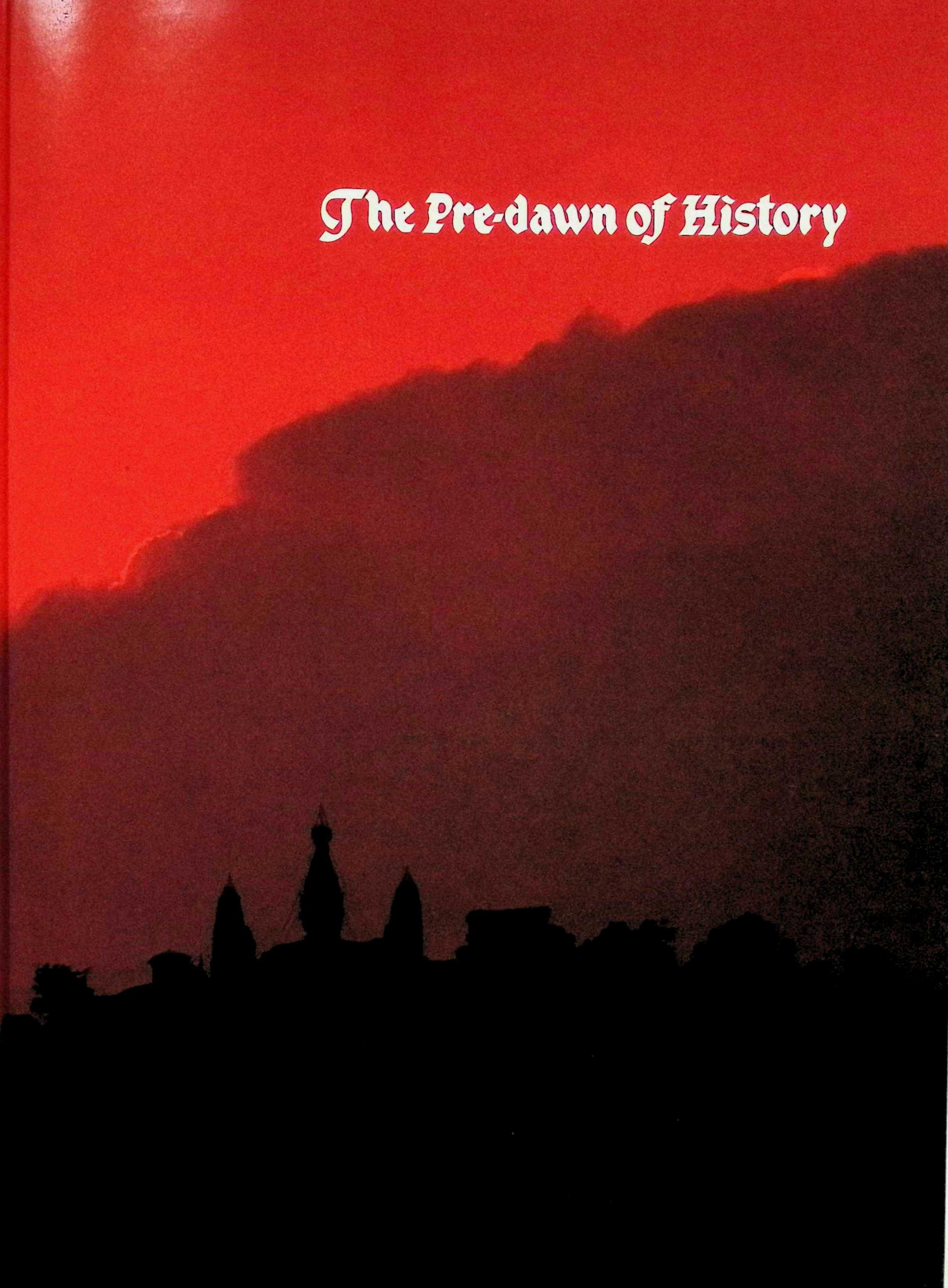
Bibliography 227





Preface

The Pre-dawn of History



In the aeons when the Himalayas were young, the Valley that we now know as Kathmandu was a vast lake surrounded by the ramparts of the hills. Legend inspires the mind to picture this great expanse of water glistening against the emerald hills, and reverently and subtly reflecting the austere shades of the Himalayas in some early dawn before the time of man. It is said that the Buddha Vipasvin, who aeons ago foresaw the splendour and beauty of Kathmandu, came to the lake and cast a lotus seed into its waters. The seed germinated and stirred the waters with a prescient stalk, on which there blossomed at the centre of the lake a miraculous lotus as large as a chariot wheel. The lotus had ten thousand petals of gold, its stamens were of the same metal, its pistils were of lapis lazuli, and diamonds and rubies formed the pollen of this magnificent flower. And from its very centre leapt a flame purer and more lucent than the sun's own rays. Thus did the AdiBuddha, the Self-existent One, He who precedes the beginning of time, manifest Himself.

The ages passed; the Himalayas matured; the fabulous flower blossomed everfresh in the heart of the lake and its radiant flame overshadowed even the shining snows of the great ranked peaks. The Buddha of each age visited it. And the Buddha of the third age prophesied, on the steep banks of the lake, the passing of the lotus and the coming of the Boddhisatva who would release the waters and permit the Valley to emerge. In the fullness of time, the Boddhisatva Manjushri departed from the seven walls of his home in China to fulfil his destiny. From the north-east he entered the slopes of the lake. There, he unsheathed his great sword "Moonsmile" and with one stroke slit a gorge to the south-east of the lake. From this gorge, Chobhar, the waters of the lake flooded out, carrying with their tumbling flood the Nagas[1] and the monsters. These flowing waters gave birth to the river Bagmati, and the empty Valley that they left behind came to be known as Kathmandu.

This striking legend embellishes the origin of Kathmandu. In remembrance of it, even today at Swayambhu, the sacred prints of Manjushri's feet are venerated in the shrine. Myth and tradition, legend and history are impossible to disentangle in the early period of the Valley's history. Nor can any cold fact of history symbolize better than this vivid legend how, from the very start, faith blending with myth and religion mirrored the beauty of nature and crystallized into the heritage of man in this blessed Valley.

It is only around the fifth century A.D. that hard archaeological evidence begins to provide a structure to the history of the Valley. Yet, the indirect evidence of references to this area from the archaeological data available in nearby lands, interpolation from later testimony, and the interpretation of myths and legends make it possible to construct an acceptable chronology.

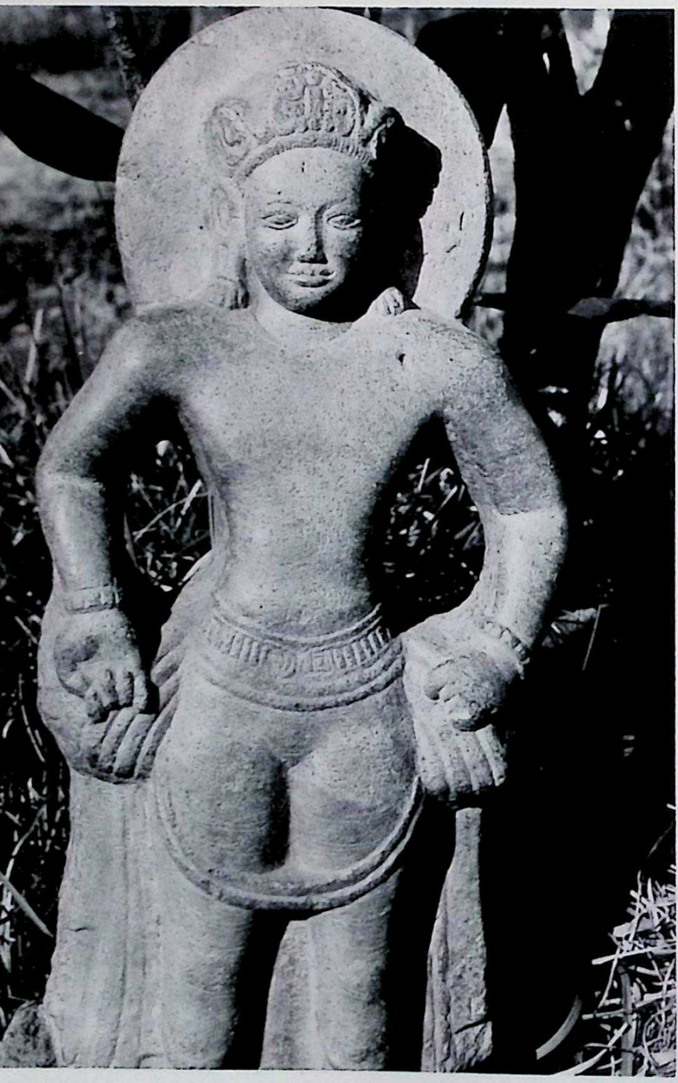
The Himalayas, with their awe-inspiring peaks, loom so large in both the religious and literary traditions of Hindu culture from its earliest origins, that it is difficult to imagine their slopes as uninhabited. It would appear that the earliest inhabitants of the hills south of the Himalayas were primitive, aboriginal tribes who belonged to the Tibeto-Burman group. Living evidence of these first occupants of the soil is to be seen in the present so-called 'broken' tribes, such as the Hayus, Chepangs and

Previous pages: No. 1. Kathmandu at dawn (front piece). No. 2. The Changu Narayan temple facade
No. 3. The Narasimha statue at Hanuman Dhoka, 1673 A.D. No. 4. The Sakyamuni Buddha at Uku Bahal
No. 5. The Nyatapola temple, lit up. No. 6. Swayambhu hill in the morning mist
Opposite page: The sage Manjushri, copper statuette

Satars, some of whom have even today not settled into the first stage of civilization, the cultivation of land, but continue to eke out their existence by hunting and scouring the forests. Even during that period it is said sages and heroes from the south, like Kausika, Viswamitra and King Bharata, came to meditate in the shades of the Himalayas. That this land is holy was thus accepted from the earliest times. The chronicles also mention the Gopalas (cow-herds) and Ahirs (buffalo-keepers) as the first rulers of the Valley. Thus the origin of the racial mix of the Valley is not clear.

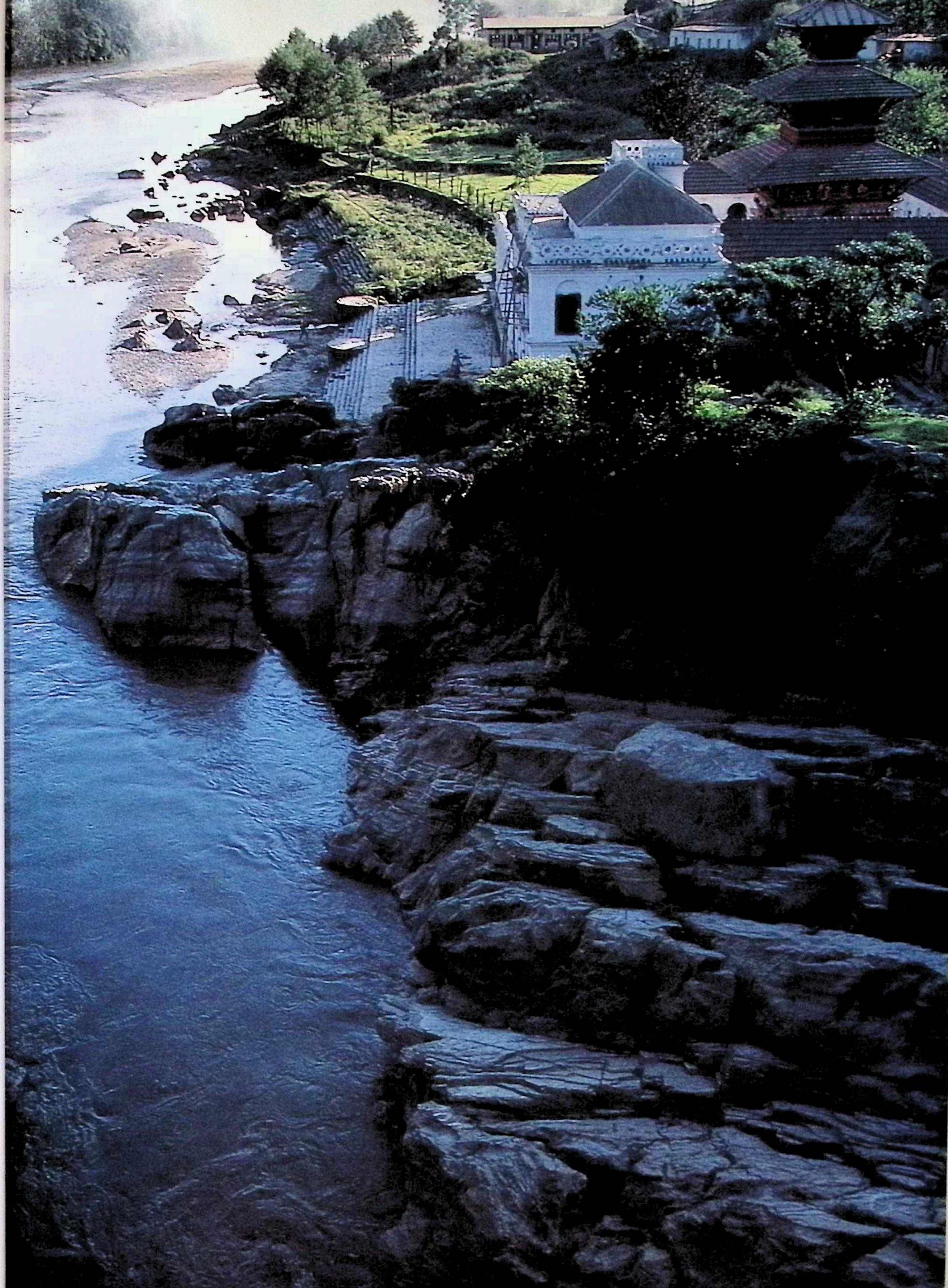
Later, there seem to have been successive waves of Mongol settlers descending from the east, displacing these aboriginal tribes from the hills. The legend of Manjushri's descent from the north symbolizes the incursion of these Kirata settlers whose descendants now live mostly in the eastern hills of Nepal. (They are famous, as the Rais and Limbus who have won numerous Victoria Crosses in the Gorkha Brigades.) The Kiratas are mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Kiratarjuna* by Bharavi. There is reference in the *Mahabharata* to a Nepalese prince, who, with an astuteness that was to later typify Nepalese diplomacy, fought on the winning side of the Pandavas. It is not just these references in Sanskrit literature, pointing to the north-eastern Himalayan foothills as the home of the Kiratas, that substantiate the hypotheses of these early settlements. The Mongol origin of many of the tribal people of the hills, such as the Tamangs, Gurungs, Magars, Rais, Limbus, etc., argues in favour of a pre-Aryan settlement from the north. The non-Sanskrit origin of a profusion of place names in Licchavi records supports this. Thus the hypothesis of these Mongol settlers coming south to the fertile valleys of the Nepalese hills and setting up habitation there has a very strong basis. As one expert says, "The matrix of Nepalese culture must have been laid by these Kiratas."[2] For, the Kiratas seem to have been in the Valley for several centuries before the Licchavis came to Nepal.

Similarly, it is from these Kirata origins that we must trace the lineage of the



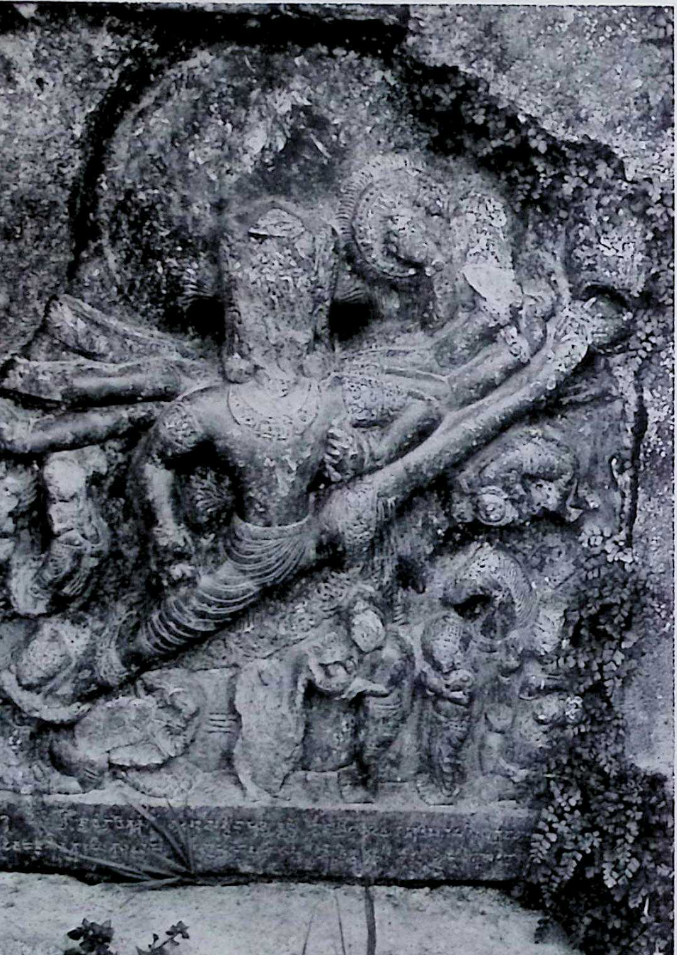
Above: Kirati Raja, Chhauni Museum, 3-4c

Opposite page: Chobhar gorge with the Jal Vinayak temple



'Newar' people, whose contribution to art and architecture is the main theme of this book. Yet the Newars were not a simple ethnic group; they evolved by absorbing and assimilating other strains. So, a series of Aryan invasions caused an intermingling of their stock with the original Kirata strain, producing what D.R. Regmi refers to as a 'composite' people,[3] whose sensibilities seem to have been honed to a fine edge by this continuing change in racial composition. It may be that this constant admixture of varied racial oils flowed uninterrupted in Nepal's artistic tradition. It is also possible that as new waves of invaders dominated the Valley, the original Kiratas were depressed in the social scale and the Newars, with the closest ancestral links to the Kiratas, became the Jyapus, who are today known to be the most skilled farmers in Nepal.

If we must grope in this manner in the dark for pre-fifth century history in the Valley, far better evidence of an earlier period can be found in the Terai. The court of King Janaka, whose daughter Sita married the divine hero of the great epic *Ramayana*, is generally taken to have existed near the site of present-day Janakpur. The archaeological finds at Tilaurakot, Banjarahi and Paisia have indicated the beginnings of habitation going back to a very early period; in particular, NBP wares from the eighth and ninth centuries B.C. have been found. Thus there is hard evidence of a civilization within the frontiers of Nepal in the early centuries B.C.



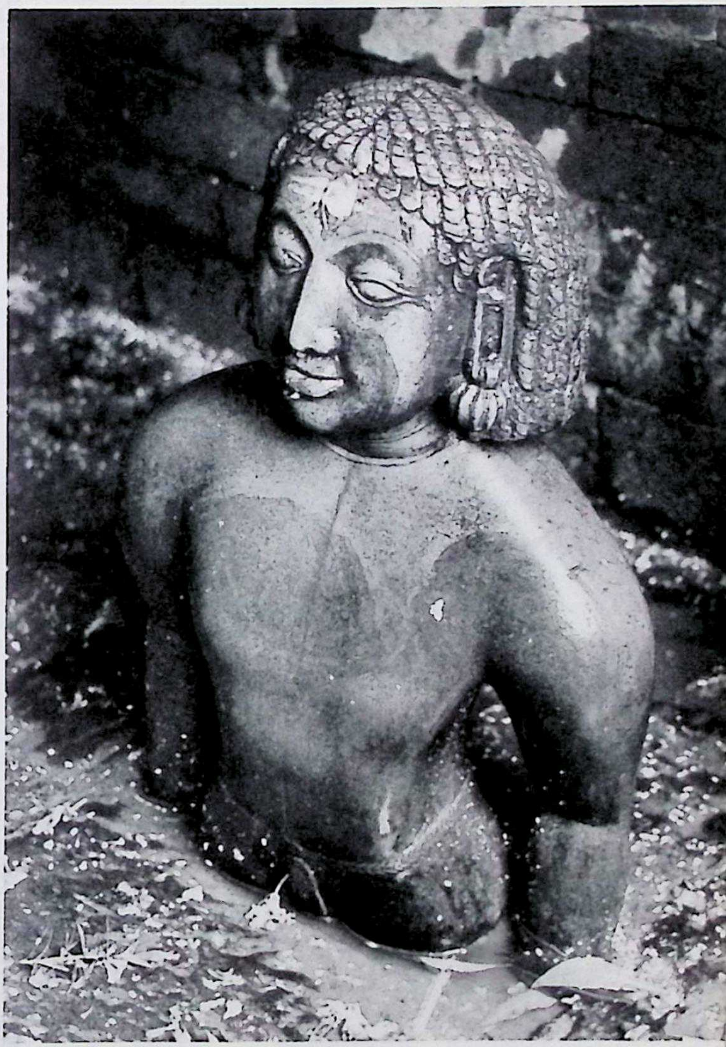
All this leads one to look for the origins of cultural expression in the Valley at a period considerably earlier than the fifth century. The Licchavi sculptures of the fifth century are so advanced and mature in their formulation that they imply a tradition of non-functional art that goes back quite a few centuries. The descriptions of buildings given by Chinese travellers in the seventh century also indicate a complex architectural tradition and development of skills in stone-carving, wood-carving and the making of jewellery, which again must have taken several centuries to evolve. In this way, we can infer that the roots of the Valley's

Left: Trivikramamurti, 467 A.D.

civilization and culture are to be found in a much earlier period, although the hard evidence of dated inscriptions exists from only the fifth century onwards.

This line of logic follows the recently-published findings of Bangdel.[4] He has shed light on a considerable number of old images, several of which were totally disregarded until now. These sculptures, such as the Gaja-Lakshmi (mother-goddess) of Naihiti (Patan), the Chaturmukhi (the four-faced idol) at the Rastriya Nachghar and the Vishnu at the Satyanarayan temple, Hadigaon, which he places variously between the first and the fourth centuries A.D., are clear indications of a pre-Licchavi artistic tradition in Nepal. With an artist's perceptive eye, the author convincingly demonstrates the similarities between these Nepalese images and their Indian counterparts of the Mathura-Kusana tradition dating from the fourth century A.D. Whether other scholars accept the precise dates he assigns to these figures or not, he has cited a sufficiently large number of sculptures to convince us of the existence of a body of art with distinctive traits, which preceded the Licchavi school. As he rightly argues, this indicates that there were Indo-Aryan settlers in the Valley before the establishment of Licchavi rule. Whether these Indo-Aryans were Sakyas, Mallas or Abhir Guptas is, of course, pure speculation. The nature of the art clearly indicates that these Aryan settlers enhanced the Valley with their Mathura-Kusana heritage.

Just as the birth of the Valley is vividly represented in the allegory of legends, so is the transition of the Valley from the primitive pastoral phase to one of settled cultivation set out in another Nepali legend: The waters of the great lake drained out of the Valley. An overgrowth of shrubs and trees covered it. So dense was this cover and so sacrosanct its origins that men feared to break into its sacred groves with the plough. But a man called Balbala, who stuttered and had no family, used his freedom from familial bonds to violate the virgin forests of the Valley. So daring was his act that it emboldened the shy stammerer Balbala to



Right : Kali Virupaksha, near Pashupatinath Temple, 3 c.

transform the frustrations of stuttering speech into vibrant sculpture. He carved a statue of himself in the land where he introduced agriculture. This statue later became the centre of a cult which venerated Balbala.

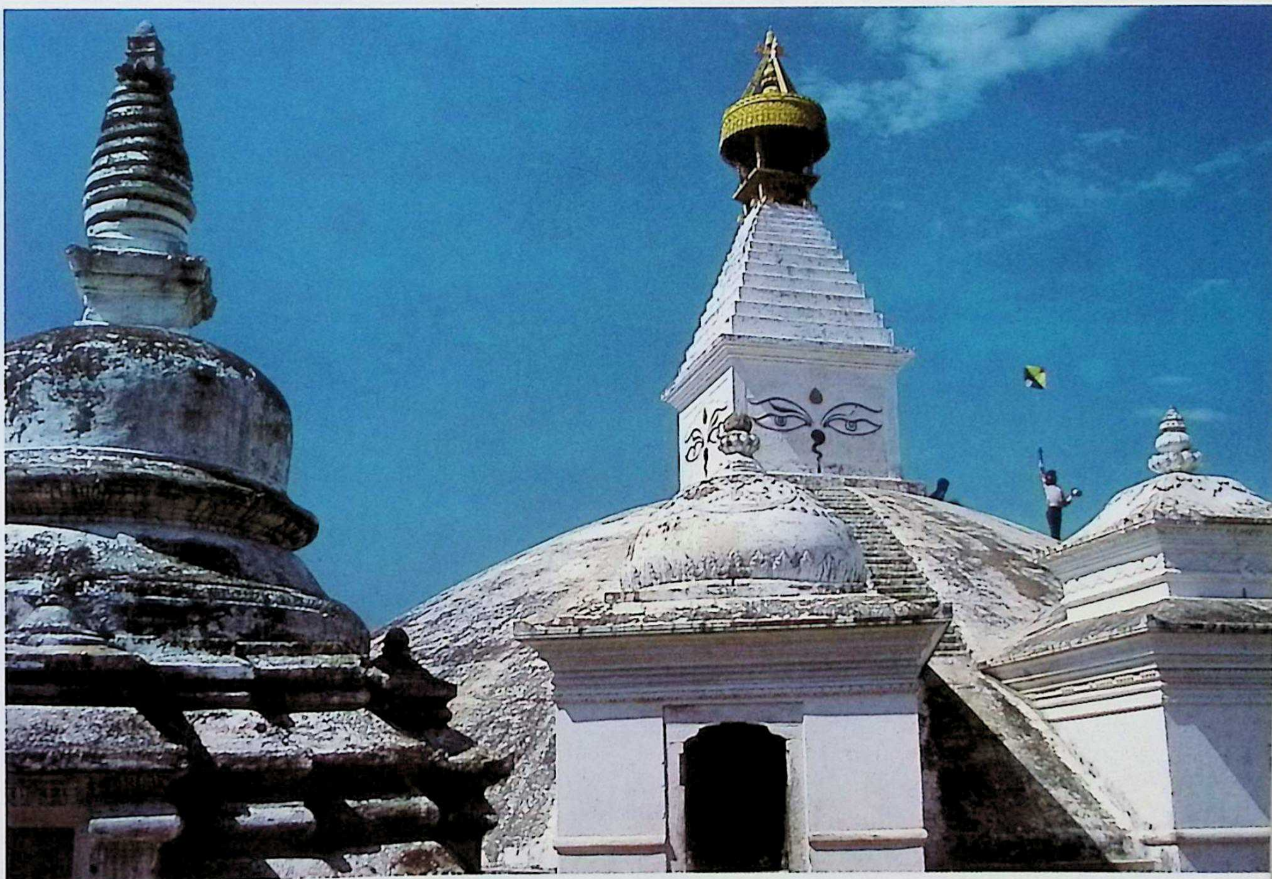
This legend is fascinating in that it connects art and agriculture on the one hand, and, on the other, rewards the violation of nature and the act of self-aggrandisement (of carving a self-portrait instead of an idol dedicated to God) by making the perpetrator a cult-hero. For our purposes, it symbolizes the birth of civilization, cultivation, settlement and art as the confident achievement of self-conscious inhabitants. Thus it reinforces the early antecedents of culture.

Before this, religion seems to have found a physical expression in sacred stones which were worshipped in their natural shapes. Such stones, set up as altars or piled under trees, formed the focus of veneration. It is in this way that the 'broken' tribes and the early Kiratas must have revered their gods. These sacred rocks are as timeless as they are formless. Specific divinities are represented in such unhewn stones in several temples even today. Elsewhere, finely-carved images of God are put side by side with such numinous stones — and both venerated equally. As Stella

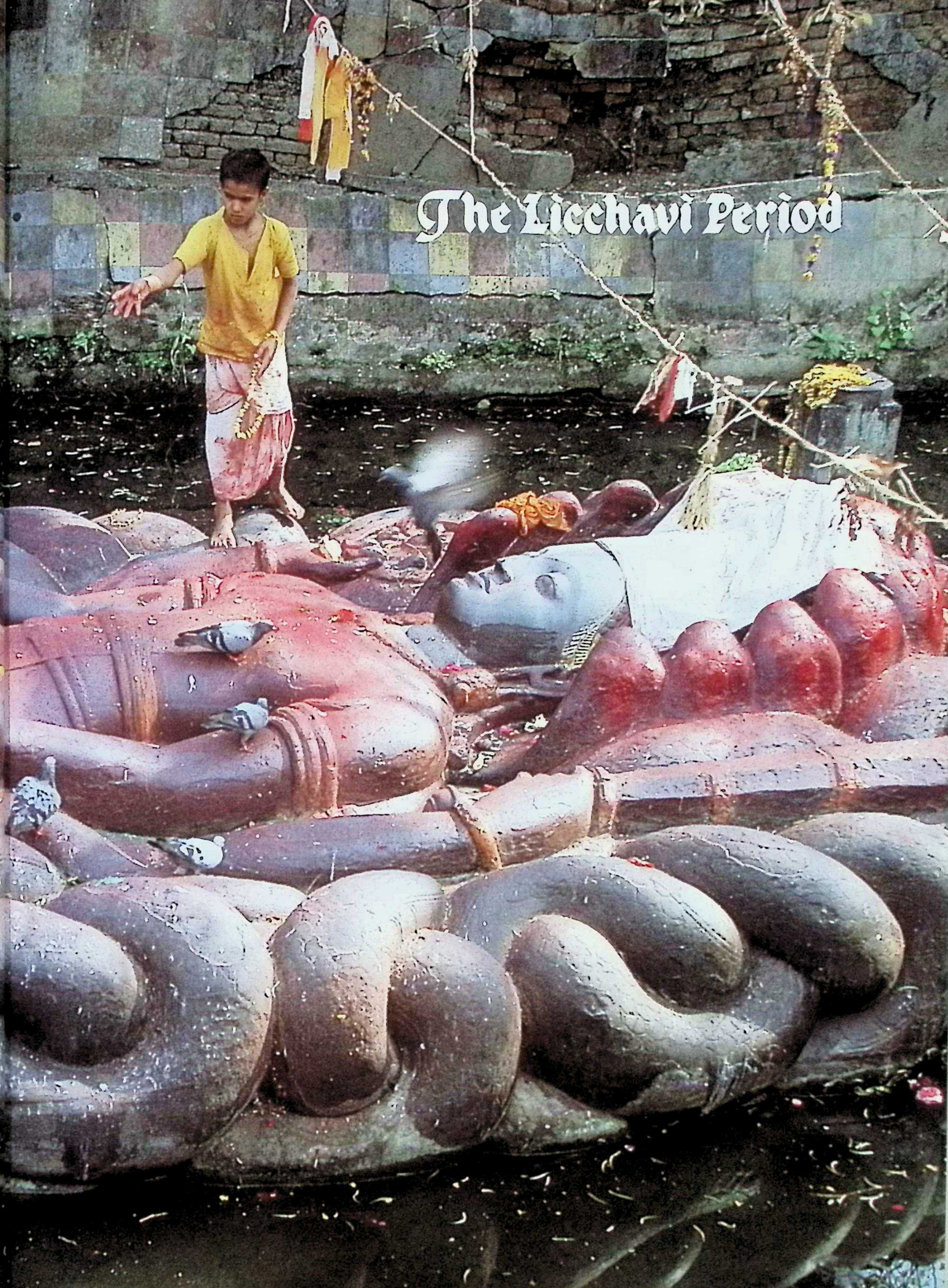
Pashupatinath Temple

Kramrisch puts it, "such co-existence maintains a tension between the form that is the work of art ... and the unformed datum of nature, the mere support of the numinous."[5] This theme of continuity between nature, religion and art thus permeates the culture of the Valley from its legendary origins.

As we approach authentic history, a few landmarks of tradition stand out in the eerie pre-dawn light. While there is no definite evidence of Ashoka's visit in the third century B.C. to the Valley, the low hemispherical shape of the stupas (known technically as the 'egg' shape) in Chahbahal and Patan that he or his daughter Charumati are said to have built, are very similar to the earliest stupas in India. At any rate, the inscribed columns in Rampurva, Nandangarh and Aray (just south of present-day Raxaul) indicate that Ashoka travelled in the region to the north of them (that is, within the borders of present-day Nepal). There is also little doubt that Buddhist monks travelled to the Valley around this time. From the wealth of tradition and references in Indian sources, we can safely infer that a special sanctity was attached to Patan. Besides Buddhist saints, Badrabahu, the last great Jain apostle, is said to have spent his last years in the Valley. Thus the origins of the Patan stupas are ascribed to the pre-Licchavi period.



The Ashoka stupa near Sankhamul, Patan



The Licchavi Period

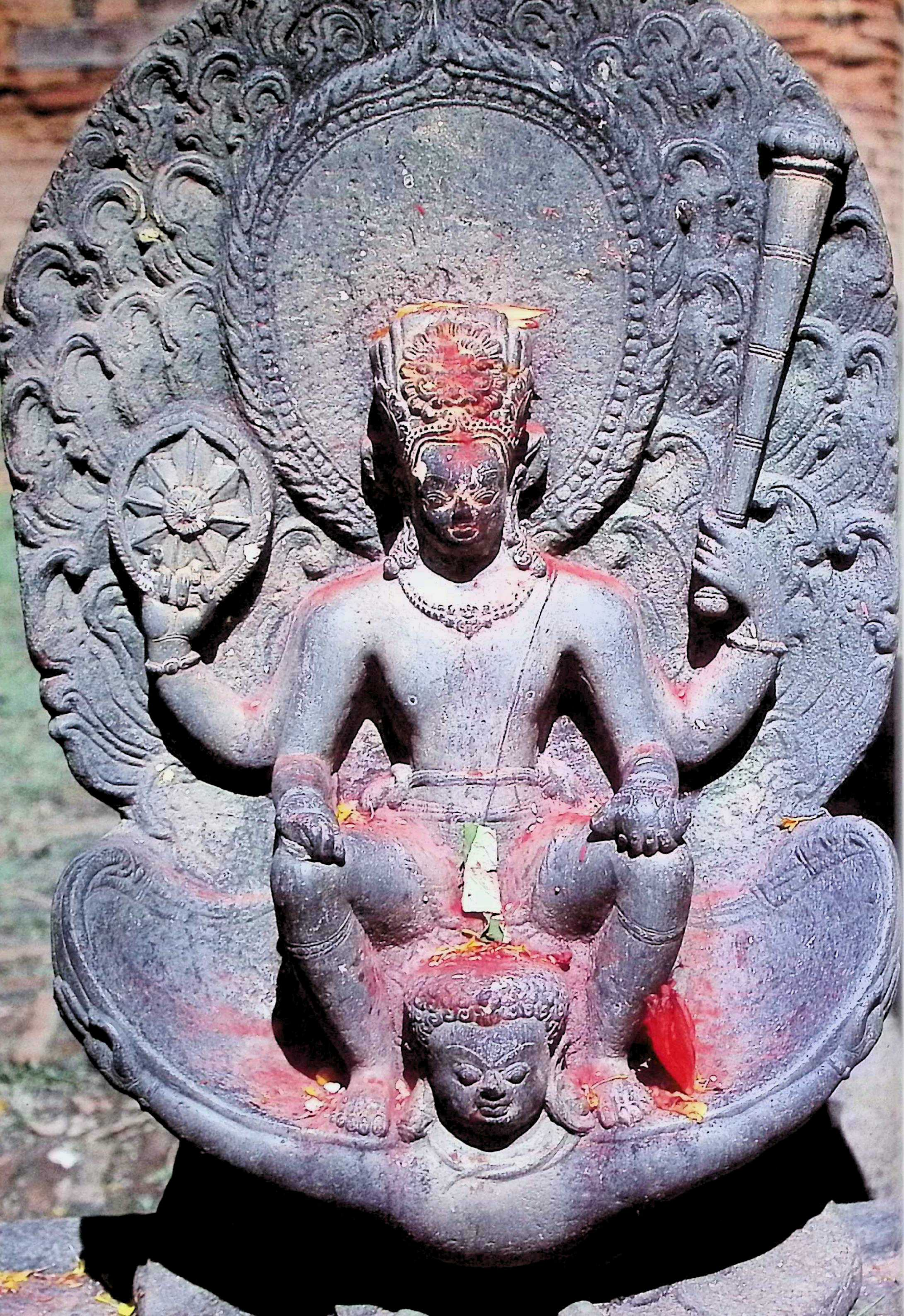
The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta (336-375 A.D.) mentions Nepal as a border kingdom in his time. As the first archaeological evidence comes to hand in the fifth century, we find a flourishing and fully-developed culture. In many respects, the vestigial remains of the Licchavi period proclaim it the finest hour of Nepalese art. The classic simplicity and vigour of its sculpture — the fluid movement of the figures, the elegance of composition and the maturity in the modelling of the limbs — are in many respects superior to the comparative complexity and clumsiness of later art. As has been pointed out earlier, this art cannot have blossomed without budding. The meagre evidence of the early period of Nepalese history is not so much a reflection of the poverty of that period's culture or history, as a reflection of the meagre archaeological research in the past and the budgetary poverty of the Archaeological Department in recent years. In the pre-1950 period, the policy of isolation adopted by Nepal and the religious taboos of the period effectively throttled any archaeological work. There were only a few rare exceptions, such as the work of Sylvain Lévi. In the post-1950 period, there was a close correlation between the illicit export of art treasures and archaeological work. It is not astonishing that the Department has had to concentrate on the protection of what is above ground rather than exposing new excavations to the swift depredation of this innovative form of private enterprise. When Nepal is able to initiate further archaeological efforts, far greater evidence will substantiate our projections about the pre-dawn of Nepalese history.

The origins of the Licchavi state are as obscure as the antecedents of its culture. We know neither when nor how the Licchavis established their supremacy over the Valley. The first recorded king in the Licchavi Vamsavali or chronicles of Nepal is Jaya Deva I; the first ruler, whose reign can be clearly traced, is Manadeva. He came to the throne around the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. A fairly wide kingdom, stretching from the Gandaki to possibly the Kosi, seems to have been within his sphere of influence. We know this because Manadeva's inscriptions speak of the way he subdued recalcitrant feudatories in the east, and the wars he fought in the west to win back the allegiance of Mallapuri feudals to their Licchavi overlord. He emerges from the inscriptions as a powerful and determined monarch, who was also a patron of the arts. He built many temples and perhaps even some Buddhist stupas or viharas. The glory of this King and his state are startlingly clear in spite of the fog of pre-history. The Licchavi state that came into historic focus under Manadeva seems to have endured until at least the eighth century. On the whole, the Licchavi kings were successful in maintaining a stable and prosperous state, under whose patronage or protection a thriving art tradition flourished.

A Chinese account, based probably on the report of Wang Hsüan Tseu (he visited Nepal three times including the trip in 657 A.D.), described a building of several "storeys which is above 200 *tcheu* in height and 80 *pou* (400 ft) in circuit. Ten thousand men can be housed beneath it. It is divided into three terraces and each terrace is divided into seven storeys. In the four pavilions there are sculptures which astonish you. Jewels and pearls decorate them." This is probably a description of Kailasakuta, the palace built by Amsuvarman, or of Managriha, the palace built by either Manadeva or his successors.

Previous page : The reclining Vishnu at Budhanilkantha, 6 c.

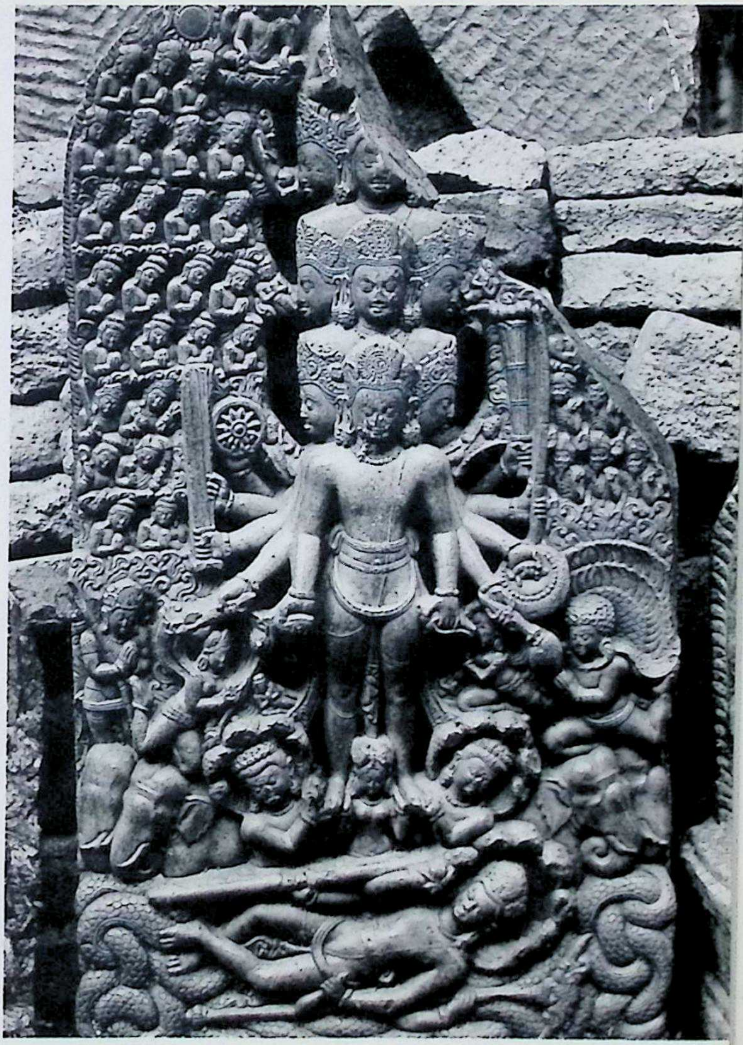
Opposite page: Garuda at Changu Narayan (believed to be a representation of Manadeva), 5 c.



Another description in the Chinese annals of the T'ang dynasty, probably reported by another seventh century traveller, says, "In the middle of the palace there is a tower of seven storeys roofed with copper tiles. Its balustrade, grills, columns, beams and everything therein are set about with fine and even precious stones. At each of the four corners of the tower projects a water pipe of copper. At the base there are golden dragons that spout forth water. From the pinnacle, water is poured through tunnels which find their way below, streaming like a fountain from the mouth of golden Makara." These detailed descriptions from the Licchavi period make it clear that by the seventh century the main settlements of the Valley already had the profusion of pagodas, temples, sculptures, paintings and carvings which, in another form, greeted Kirkpatrick or Hodgson when they went to Nepal in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since many of these were wooden, these fabulous multi-tiered buildings have not survived. From the quality of the stone work that remains, we can surmise the marvel and admiration of those Chinese travellers at finding such wonders in this hidden niche in the mountains.

These para-urban settlements in the Valley at that time were probably very different in pattern from the shape they were to evolve into in the eighteenth century. The earliest settlements were probably on the higher parts of the Valley, in such locations as Changu Narayan, Pharping, Swayambhu; moving down in Licchavi times to the areas now known as Deo-Patan, Dhumbharahi and Hadigaon in Kathmandu district, and across the Bagmati in the higher parts of Patan. This implies that around two millennia ago the lower parts of the Valley were marshy, and it was only as the Bagmati cut deeper into the soft rock of Chobhar that city life began to flourish on the fertile lower lands which this erosion created.

The Licchavi period initiated certain patterns that were to be repeated in later history. Whereas we find the early Licchavis doing their best to keep the Gupta empire at arm's length, during the sixth and seventh centuries, rulers in the Valley had to struggle against invaders



Opposite page: Vishnu on Garuda at Changu Narayan, 9 c.
Right: The Vishnu Vishwarupa at Changu Narayan, 8 c.

from the north. Culturally speaking, at this point, the impact of the south was predominant: the rulers had originally migrated from the south; the two great dominant religious streams, Hinduism and Buddhism, came from the south. Along with the new ruling elite came their social and linguistic traits, their art forms, and many judicial and administrative patterns that over time intermingled with old Kirata customs. The ruling elite's connection with the south led to a complex interchange with the south of religious and economic, social and marital customs which reinforced this influence. The Licchavi period spans many changes in dynasties in the immediate south, from the Kusans and the Guptas to Harsavardana of Kanauj, and later even to the Pala dynasty in the eighth century. No southern empire appears to have conquered Nepal in this epoch. Tibet exercised virtually no cultural influence over Nepal during this particular era, but may have occasionally defeated the rulers of the Valley by military force. This view has been put forward by a number of authorities from Lévi to Slusser. The kingdom of Nepal was then, as it is now, a "tender Yam between two great boulders", in Prithvi Narayan Shah's evocative phrase. Only by drawing its strength from the firm and fertile soil in the cleft between the rocks and by adapting its growth to the spaces between these boulders has this enduring plant weathered the centuries, often blurring its shape, but effective in maintaining its distinct identity. The invasion of Srong-Tsen-Gambo, the king of Tibet who conquered large parts of China, is an example of the ability of Nepalese rulers to turn foreign threats to their national advantage: the Nepalese ruler sought an alliance with this powerful Tibetan king to restore his dynasty. To pledge his faith, perhaps, he gave the Tibetan king his daughter, Princess Bhrikuti, in marriage. This princess is reputed to have 'tamed the savage beast' Srong-Tsen-Gambo and conquered the minds of both the king and his subjects through Buddhism, which then became the dominating ideology of Tibet.[1] Thus this princess, celebrated in later lore as the Green

Left: The Vishnu Vikranta at Changu Narayan, 7-8 c.

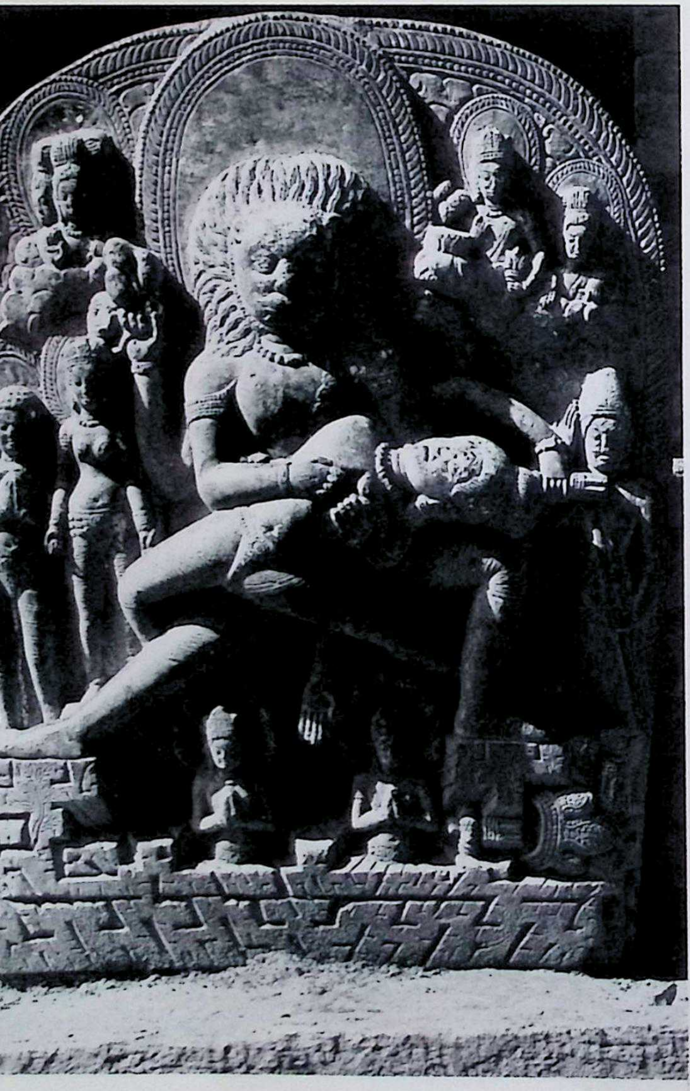
Tara in the pantheon of Tibet Lamaism, established the dominant role of Nepalese trade and culture in Tibet, by conquering the conqueror.

In the long list of revered kings of the Licchavi period, whose main surviving claim to fame is the artists of their times, the one person who stands out is Amsuvarman (594-621 A.D.), who was not a Licchavi according to the Vamsavali. Unlike the others, he did not inherit his throne. He initiated another recurrent theme in Nepalese history which was to persist until 1846 — that of an able *maire du palais,* seizing the power to rule from a *roi fainéant.* He reunited a kingdom divided by the *de jure* ruler Sivadeva and extended its area. He was also an assiduous builder. The palace of Kailasakuta, which some authorities locate in Kathmandu[2], is the best example of his contributions to the embellishment of the art and architecture of the Valley.

A view from Dhulikhel on the route to Tibet

Though a staunch Hindu, he donated generously to many Buddhist shrines. He was wise, learned and, according to his prolific inscriptions, devoted to the welfare of his subjects.

These stone inscriptions bring to life, across the great gap of time, the powerful personality of this man whose concern with administrative and judicial matters displays a calibre unusual in ancient rulers. During the Licchavi period, two or three other nobles seem to have established themselves as rulers in place of the hereditary Licchavi kings. These feudal usurpers, such as Jisnugupta and Visnugupta (624-641 A.D.), all came from the Abhira Gupta lineage to which Amsuvarman may have been closely related. It was probably to re-establish Licchavi rule that the Tibetan invasion of Nepal took place. The ruler they brought back to Nepal was Narendradeva, who had earlier taken refuge in Tibet when ousted by Jisnugupta. Narendradeva, his son Sivadeva II, and grandson Jayadeva II, all patronised the arts and contributed to the magnificent heritage of the Licchavis.



The third pattern that emerged in this period, and that continuously repeats itself in later history, is the tendency for refugees fleeing from persecution in India to find a haven in Nepal. As Landon puts it, "the mass of Indian Buddhists who could neither brook the arrogance of the Mohammedan conquerors nor the malicious oppression of Brahmanism, found shelter in Nepal." Early Licchavi culture shows a dominance of Hindu deities because of the Hindu beliefs of these emigrés from the south. Gradually, the Buddhist beliefs of the refugees permeated the rulers. The result was a *mélange à deux,* a unique co-existence, that gives Nepalese history another definite pattern. In this way, the Licchavi period, where we find the first authenticated origins of Nepalese culture, also sets out the major themes for the later history of Nepal.

Another factor that affected the development of the Kathmandu Valley was the firm establishment during the seventh century A.D. of a new and shorter trans-Himalayan trade route between China and India through Kathmandu. This was

Left: The Narasimha at Changu Narayan, 8-9 c.

the result of the peace that Srong-Tsen-Gambo's conquest of the north of Nepal established. As a result of the newly-acquired security, routes through Lhasa via Kuti or Kyirong to Kathmandu, and then to the Gangetic plain, became more economical than the longer routes through Kashmir. Kathmandu became a vital thoroughfare for Sino-Indian traffic. Although sporadic trade and travel between Nepal and Tibet or India long preceded this, the frequent and sustained use of these routes by trans-Himalayan caravans for long spans of time had vital cultural consequences. Had the passes of Kuti and Kyirong, both of which lead directly to the Valley of Kathmandu, not been the lowest in the Himalayan range, and so the easiest for trans-Himalayan trade to use, the cultural history of the Valley might have been quite different. Though the soil of the Valley is extraordinarily fertile, it would not have been possi-

The Baudhanath stupa
Overleaf, Left: The Aryatara bronze at Swayambhu. **Right:** The Dipankara Buddha at Chhauni Museum

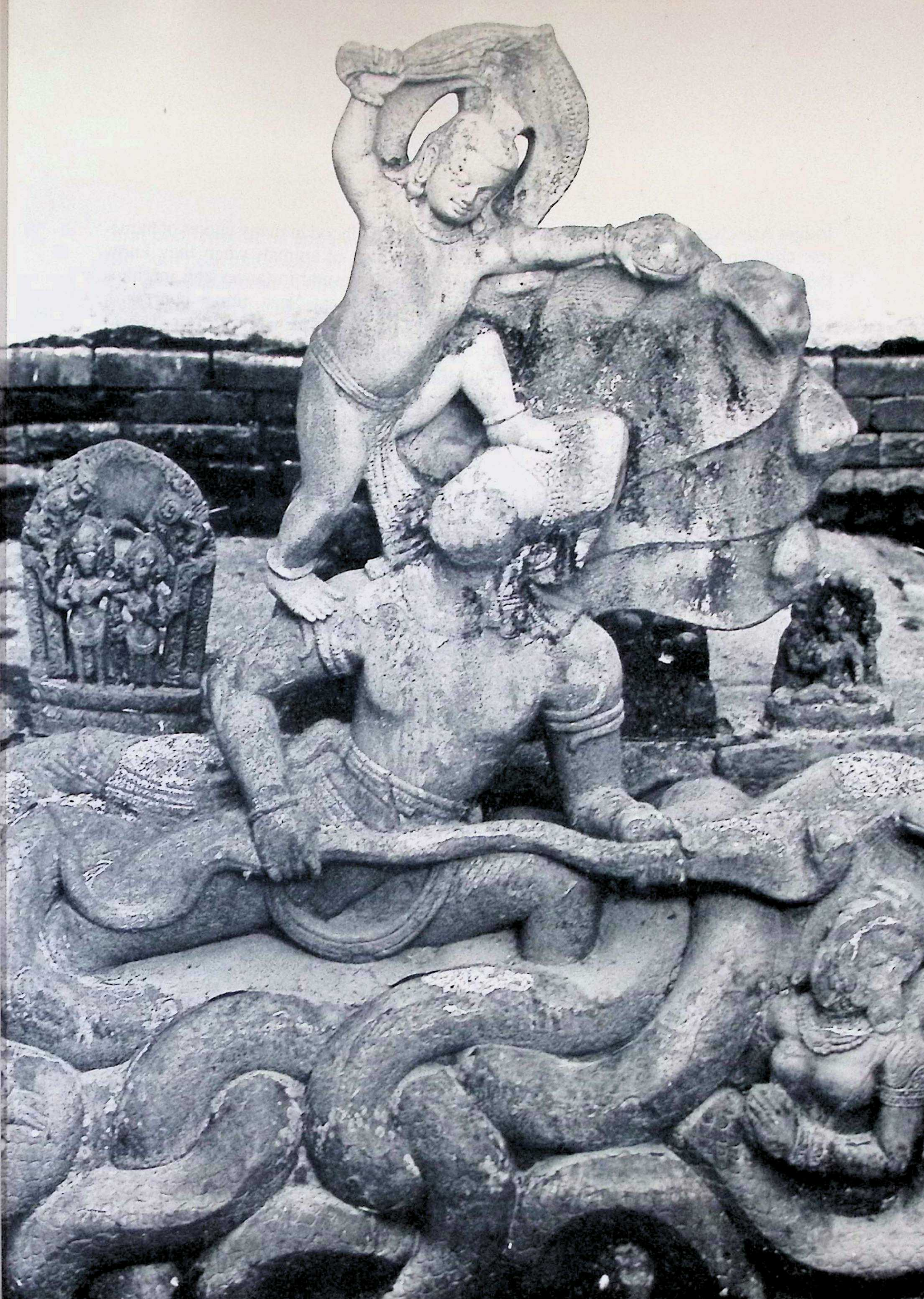
ble to sustain the cost of artistic patronage from agriculture alone. This needs to be stressed.

By a curious ecological quirk, this trade had a pervasive effect on the history of the Valley. Since winter snows closed the Himalayan passes when the southern trails were open, and malaria and monsoons made the Terai inaccessible when the northern passes were open, traders fell into the habit of stopping in Kathmandu for a considerable length of time in the course of their journeys. So they naturally influenced, and were influenced by, the way of life in the Valley. The passage of trans- Himalayan trade not only enriched Kathmandu materially, but opened it to all sorts of artistic influences, giving fresh impetus to native artists. At the same time, great artists from Nepal, like Arniko, took their skills to such distant places as the Chinese court, leaving the imprint of their influence even on that great civilization. Nurtured by the influences of this cross-continental flow of trade, the civilization of the three cities of the Valley flourished in a unique manner. This *entrepôt* character of the Valley added to the tolerant spirit of its civilization. It also provided the economic base. The merchants and nobles patronised a highly developed art form, in a manner similar to the cosmopolitan patronage that was to be found in the Italian city-states of medieval Europe.

The individual sculptures of this classic period of Nepalese art are perhaps best described by the authorities on this subject. Here I include a fine description of one of the earliest complete sculptures in the Valley, known as the "statue of a king" (third or fourth century A.D.). "Nimbate, diademed, it exhibits cruelty in the serene vaults which span from ear to ear and bind the broad features of the face to the broad dome of the forehead. Wide shoulders and chest malleably modelled lead to the disciplined flatness of the abdomen and the fullness of the drapery which sets off this part of the body as the halo does the face. The retracted elbows make the gesture of the arms instantaneous... an economy of ornament and costume underscores the modelled planes of the figure. Its physiognomy is Mongoloid and more childlike, but as determined as are the King's faces in pre-Khmer culture."[3]

The sculptures of this period show an ongoing contact between India and Nepal. In the fifth and sixth centuries, Mathura, Sarnath, and possibly many other schools of central India, which shared similar aesthetic ideals and norms, may have influenced Nepal. By the seventh century the Deccan and western Indian influences became perceptible.[4] Shades of the Aurangabad cave sculptures can be seen in the work of Nepal and, to some extent, the influence of the post-Gupta art from the Gangetic plain. In effect, the Indian influence is as catholic and wide-ranging as the origins of the immigrants into the Valley. Yet Nepal showed that while she continuously renewed the vitality of her art by welcoming the flow of diverse influences, she was able to absorb those traits and produce an art form which had its own character: the lines of the face contain distinctly Nepalese features; the Nepali form is harder, due, perhaps, to the rigorous influence of a hilly terrain; the lines of the figures seem more consciously drawn. "With this goes a loving presentation of children and flowers. In the art of the whole of

Opposite page: Kaliyadaman at Hanuman Dhoka, 6-7 c.

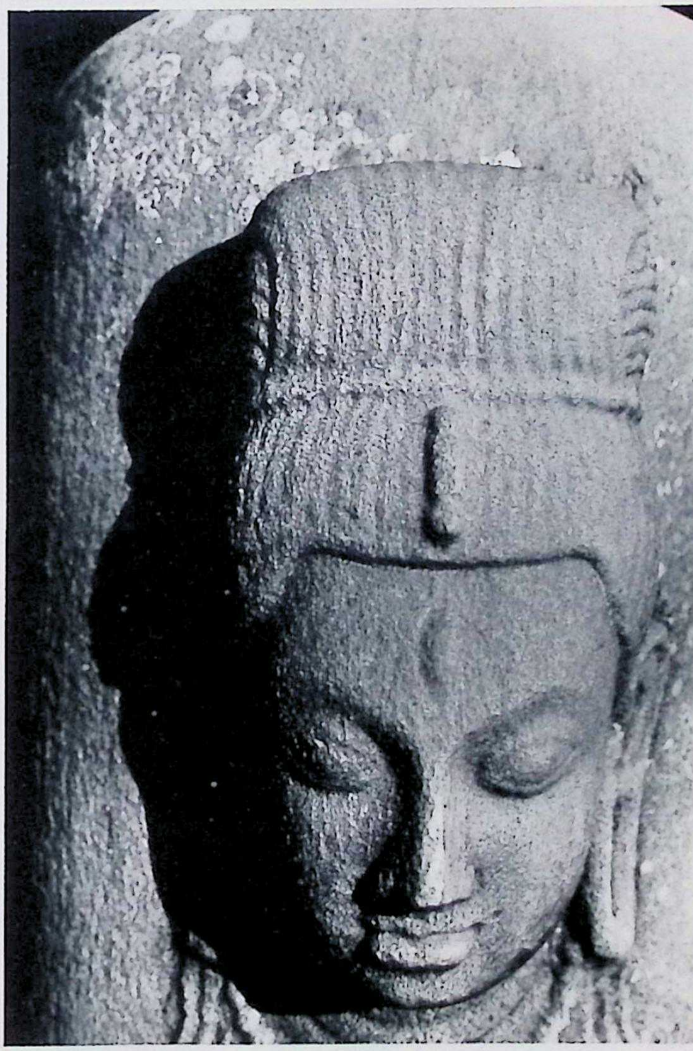


Indian Asia, Nepali sculpture has created an image of childhood in many figures of nameless children, whose movements are as pristine as those of animals when they know themselves to be unobserved."[5] The flying Vidyaras in several instances and, perhaps best, the seventh-century image of Krishna killing the great Naga, (inner courtyard, Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu) illustrate this trait. There is, in Licchavi sculpture, a combination of sleek luxury in body with an austere detachment of expression, as if the statues themselves have achieved 'Moksha' (freedom from the cycle of life — the ultimate objective of both Buddhism and Hinduism). All these factors indicate that the distinct identity of the Nepalese, which makes it an independent tradition, springs not so much from a conscious attempt at original expression in Nepalese art, as from the subtle and subconscious work of Nepalese fingers. Referring to paintings, one authority points out: "Not only was the iconography ... predetermined by religious needs, but a fairly accurate reproduction of a sacred icon was considered a desideratum. Even when the subject matter was didactic and narrative, a given convention was employed for centuries without notable and stylistic changes."[6] His perception that conformity, not originality, was the object applies equally to all forms of sacred and religious art in Nepal. It is my conjecture that if there had been a conscious pursuit of originality as in the West, this fine and harmonious adaptation of various Indian styles into a Nepalese whole would not have been possible. Because the Nepaliness emerges unintentionally while the artist is trying to emulate the Indian original, because it is the product of some pervasive instinct that pronounces its nationality in spite of the aims of this body of artists, the distinct elegance and particular character of Licchavi art achieves a harmony and lustrous grace which is all its own. This is not just national pride. It is supported by authorities from Lévi to Pal. As the latter points out, "No doubt, all these works reflect ideas and conventions borrowed from India, but they are all re-interpreted with a different expressiveness and flavour, just as the Japanese sculptors or the T'ang masters created new forms, although the content was often derived from Indian Buddhist literary sources. Indeed, Nepal seems to stand in the same relation to India as does eighth or ninth-century Java, and only because of Nepal's closer proximity to the source, can one see a stronger Indian influence on her sculpture."[7]

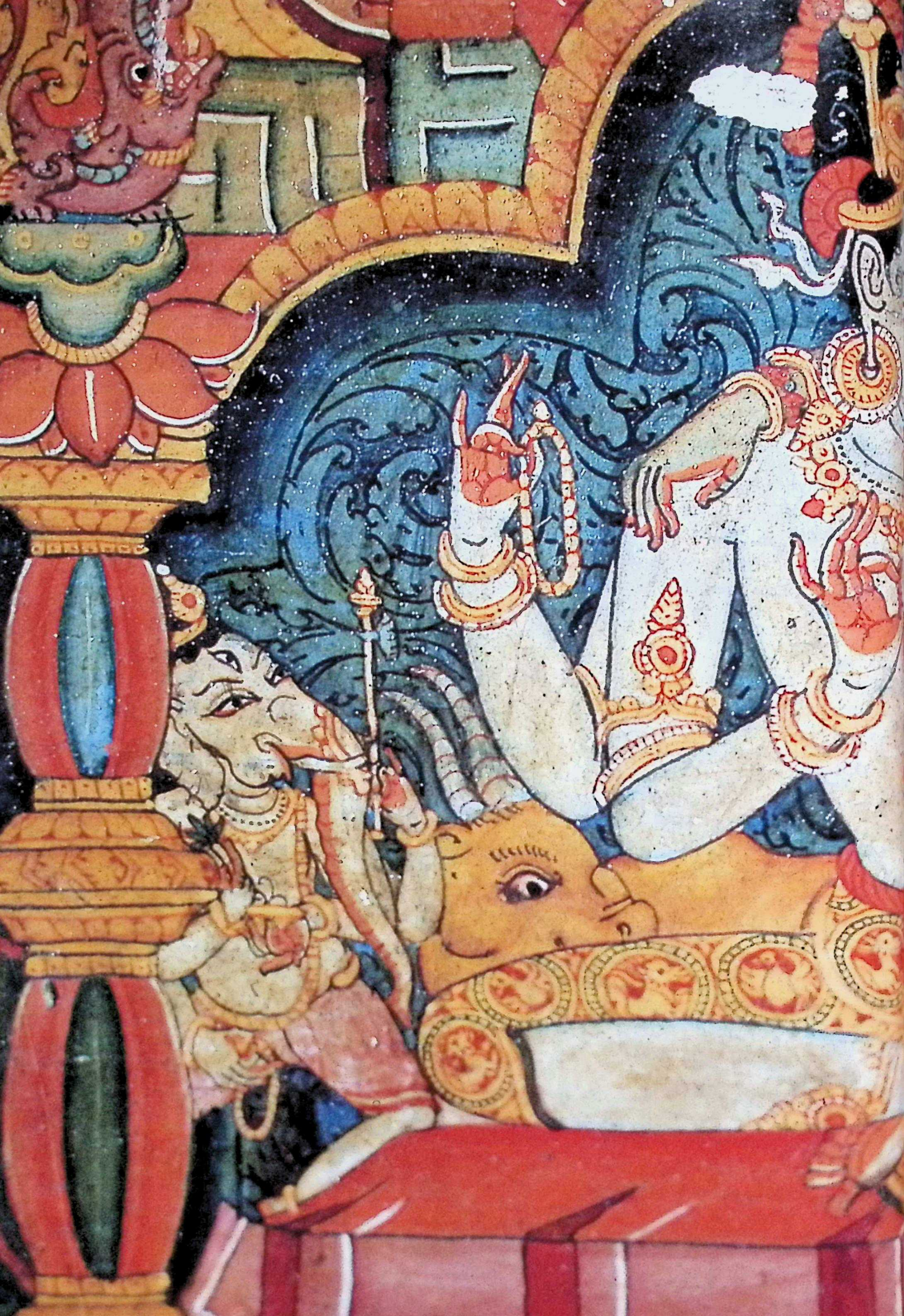
It cannot be gainsaid that Licchavi Nepal profited greatly from the influence of the south. Amongst the many fruitful products of the relationship with India was "the use of Sanskrit as the court language, the practice of issuing royal proclamations by stone inscriptions, and the implementation of an administrative structure based evidently on the imperial administrative system, the introduction of a monetary system...".[8] The Licchavis modelled several aspects of their art, culture and administration on the Imperial Gupta image. These rulers were attempting to establish a civilized state among the scattered tribal population of the Valley. The natural framework for such a state was to emulate the successful model of the south. This emulation led to Hinduisation and Sanskritisation of the primitive tribes. More pertinent from the cultural viewpoint is the fact that trade and migration were the two mechanisms that channelled new inputs. At the periphery of the subcontinent, insulated from the great upheavals and conquests of the plains by a ring of inaccessible hills and dense jungles, the Valley never became a stagnant cultural pool. Migration and trade served as subterranean channels to keep the water of this pool fresh and sweet, without ever sweeping it away in a flood.

The high points of this era are probably the seventh and the eighth centuries. It is these two centuries that provide a profusion of the extant sculptural achievements of Nepal. The seventh century, after all, was the period when the aesthetic evolution reached its culmination over most of the subcontinent. It would not be surprising if Licchavi Nepal reached the peak of its artistic endeavour at the same time. The Licchavi strain of aesthetic achievement continued to be resilient upto the ninth century.

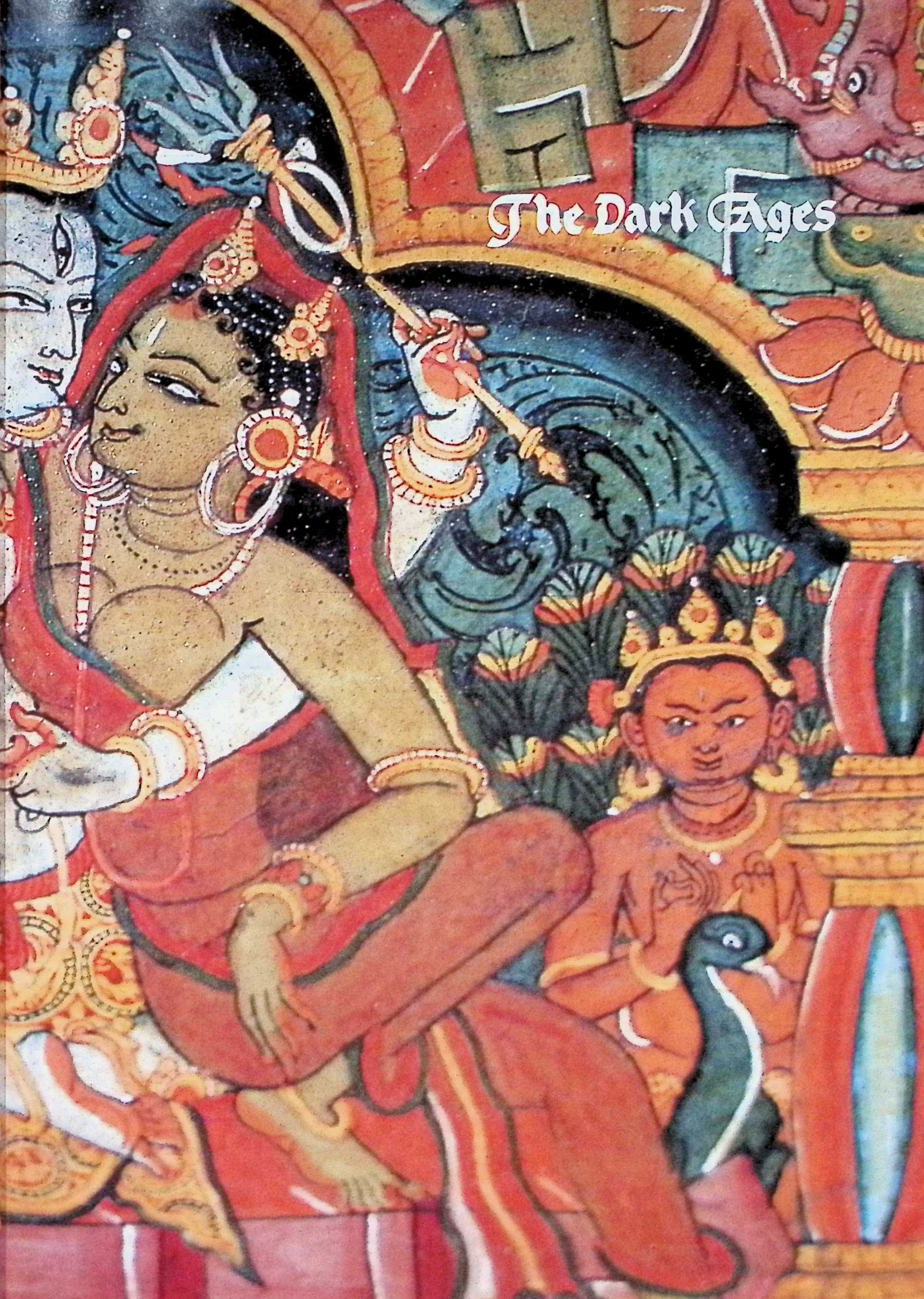
Authorities disagree as to when the Licchavi period ended. The main reason for this is that the last royal inscription discovered so far is that of Jayadeva II, dated equivalent to 733 A.D. Some scholars like Dhanavajra Bajracharya and, following him, Slusser, tend to extend the dynasty's hold upto the late ninth century,[9] on the basis of a few rare inscriptions which continue the use of the Licchavi script. There is nothing in the inscriptions to indicate that these ninth-century kings were of the Licchavi dynasty. Although Slusser, the latest and perhaps the most comprehensive historian of Nepal's culture, argues in favour of extending the Licchavi period to 879 A.D. when the Nepal Samvat was founded, this is mainly on the grounds of elegance; a natural attempt to find bookends to an era. In effect, the curtain of darkness descends at some indiscriminate point after 733 A.D, the last recorded Licchavi ruler being Jayadeva II. Since the dark ages are defined as a period for which there is virtually no recorded history, we do not see any grounds for extending the Licchavi twilight into the ninth century, when the meagre records of that period are clearly in accord with the attributes of oblivion.

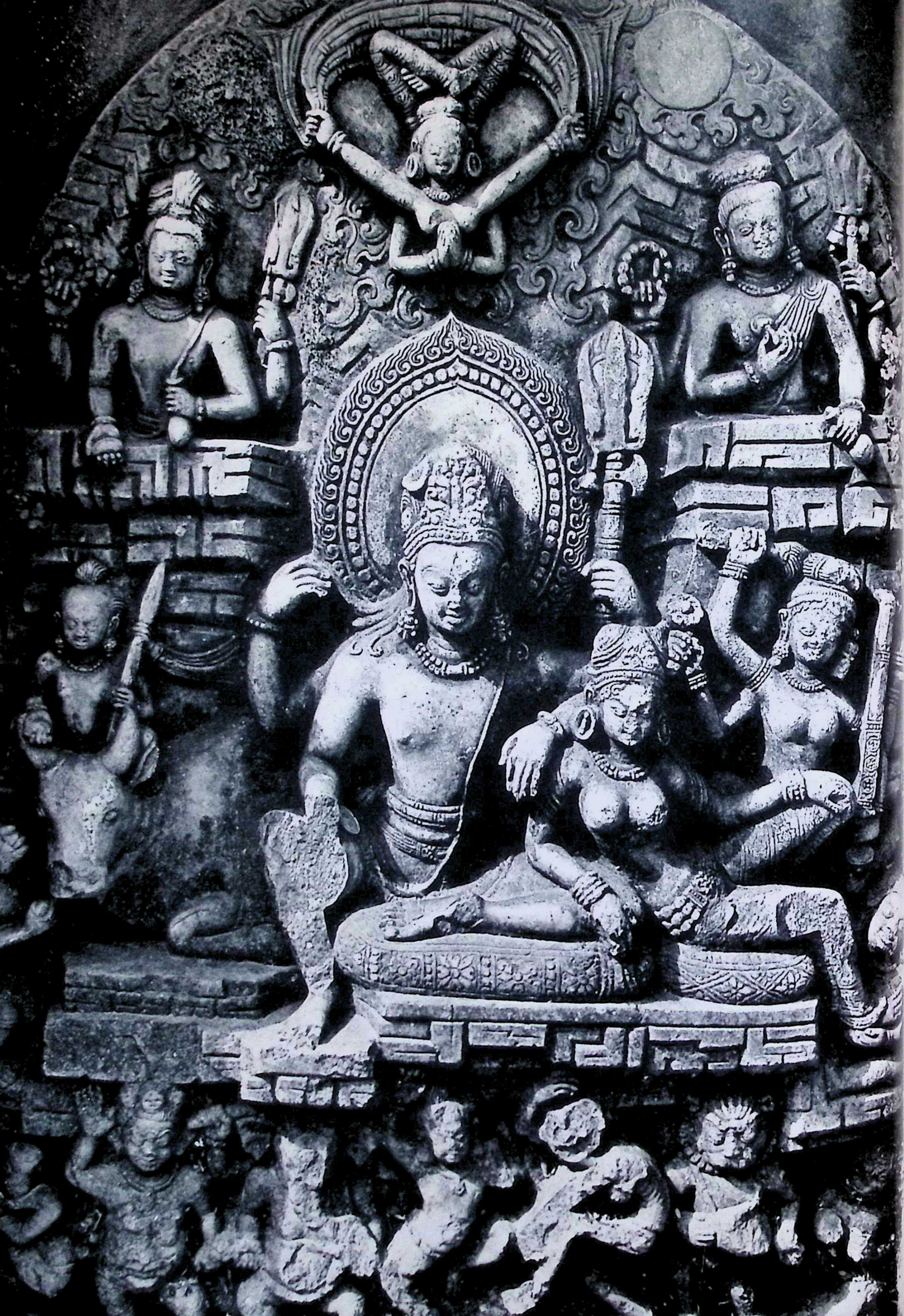


Right: Ekmukhi Linga at Pashupatinath, 5 c.



The Dark Ages





The inscriptions that give a comparatively clear outline of the Licchavi period peter out in the aftermath. It is difficult, as we have pointed out, to tell when exactly the Licchavi period ended. The Dark Ages cover roughly the period between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. The sources for these centuries are mainly religious manuscripts, so they tend to throw only an oblique light on political events. A haze descends over this period, broken by fitful flashes of light. When Pandit Atisha, one of the main founders of Tibetan Lamaism, left the monastery of Nalanda for Tibet around 1040 A.D. and stopped in Nepal on a pilgrimage to Swayambhu,[1] he had to go to Palpa to meet the ruler of Nepal. This indicates the instability of regimes and the growing weakness of the general political situation in the Valley, of which outside rulers took advantage. Around the turn of the eleventh century, a family of Deccan princes, who had conquered Tirhut and had their capital in Simraongarh (present-day Bara district), raided the Valley under the aegis of Nanyadeva. There seem to have been fairly continuous links between South India and Nepal; this incursion was only the most dramatic example of that linkage. Some authorities feel that even the Chalukyas of Kalyani (in the Deccan) had some influence over Nepal, although it is difficult to tell whether the means by which this influence was exercised was military, diplomatic or of some other nature.[2] The thin foundations on which any hypothesis must be erected lead to diverse and contradictory interpretations on the part of scholars. Whatever the disputes, it is apparent that the central authority and the extent of the dominions of the Licchavis crumbled in these murky times. Gradually, feudatories seem to have taken command. In all probability, these feudal demesnes were established in such areas as Banepa, Pharping, Bhaktapur, etc., which later come to light as mini-states in the Malla epoch. The centre of power itself shifted to Bhaktapur, so that when Anandadeva (A.D. 1147) re-established some semblance of the old kingdom briefly, it was from his base in Bhaktapur.[3] It would be both tedious and pointless to list the names of these obscure kings. Of them all, the name Gunakarmadeva seems to have struck a resonant note in popular memory. He may have been a Licchavi scion; much is attributed to him, including the founding of Kathmandu (though, Amsuvarman's Kailasakuta was, probably, already sited in the present-day precincts of Tangal).

Amongst the many kings who ruled over this divided and weakened area, gradually one family, that of the Mallas, came to the fore. It is with their coming to power that the strands of historic evolution become clearer. Despite these unsettled times, trade with the Valley seems to have continued both from Tibet and India. There was perhaps an occasional lull when raids from outside or internal instability arrested the even flow of this exchange, but the natural course continued as soon as politics permitted. Travel for religious and other reasons, particularly to and from India, seems to have persisted.

The Dark Ages of Nepalese history could not snuff out the candles of art. The Licchavi twilight stretched through the eighth and ninth centuries. Aesthetically, the history of the period can be regarded as a new source of enrichment. After the Liccha-

Previous page : A Shiva Dharma manuscript cover at Rashtriya Sanghrahalaya, 12 c.

Opposite page : Uma Maheshwar, Patan, 12 c.

vis, waves of immigrants from the near south fleeing from the Islamic invaders of India, from Mithila, Bengal and Magadh, began to flow into the Valley. "With each new ruling dynasty (or wave of immigration) came its own form of worship. The pantheon of the Valley began to bulge with gods...".[4] — Hindu incarnations, Mahayana Buddhist deities, the tantric cults of Vajrayana and so on. A curiously Nepali way of religious interbreeding began: Hindu practices modified Buddhist religion; Buddhist gods found niches in Hindu temples; the Hindu Shakta cults penetrated the Buddhist cosmos. Similarly, in art different influences coalesced as the artists, fleeing Muslim invasion from the south, found shelter in this pleasant Valley. This amalgam of races, religions and schools of art generated a tremendous ability to assimilate, digest and transmute. So, these successive influences only served to produce a finer and finer mosaic — a deeper synthesis of cultural, religious and social streams. Only in Kathmandu can one find a religious text which proclaims, without any qualms, that to worship the Buddha is to worship Shiva. In Nepal, neither the artist nor the layman has drawn lines between sects and schools, art and religion — all roads lead to God. The Nepalese grew as a nation by living, cultivating and creating together, by accepting and being accepted by one another, by absorbing and being absorbed by one another.

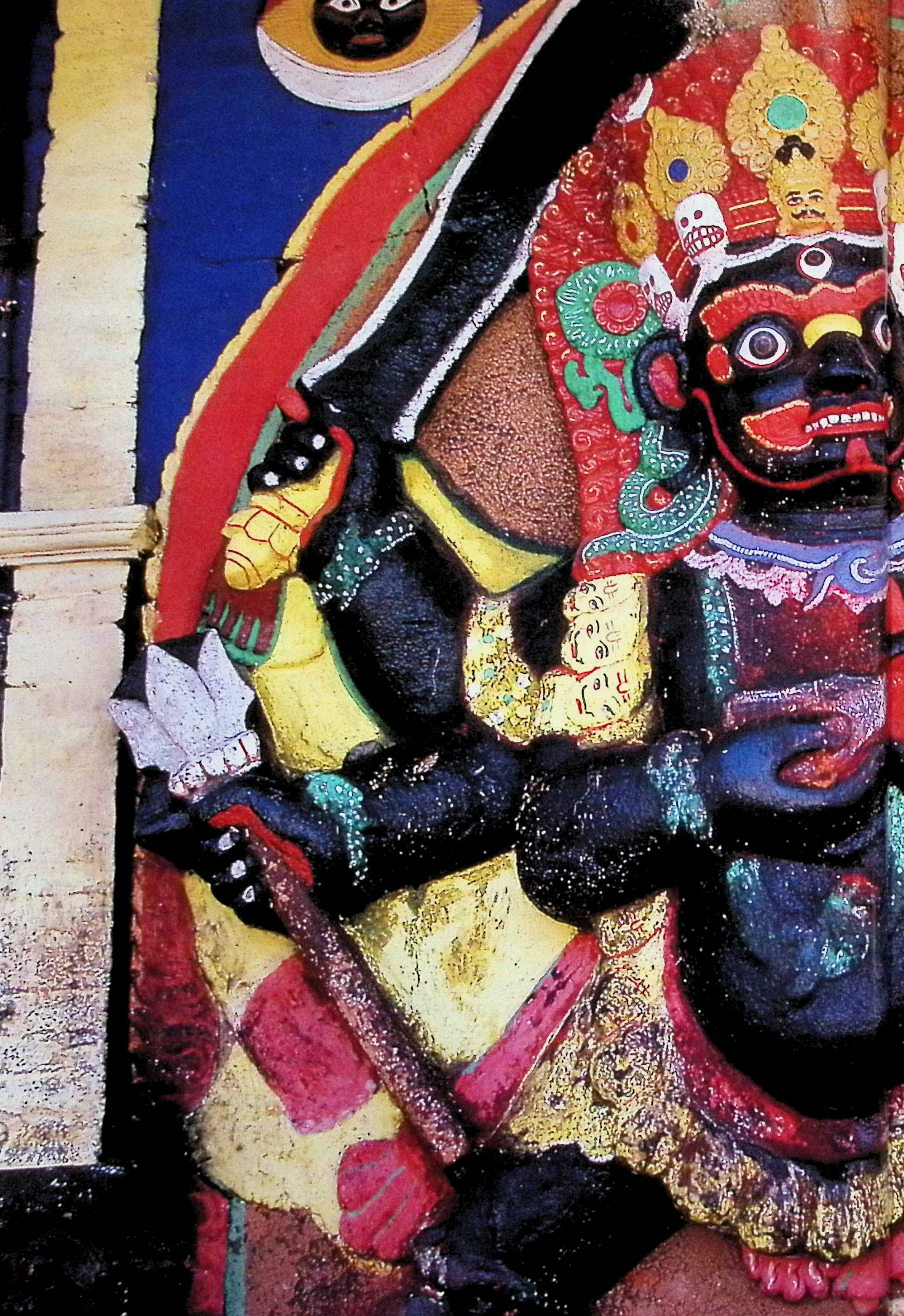
It is in this light that we must regard the successive influences on Nepalese culture. The tenth and eleventh centuries record, to a minor extent, the influence of the Pala style. This can be seen in manuscript illumination. The influence from southern India ushered in the ornate Kanarese patterns. This is more evident in sculpture both in Simraongarh and in the Valley. By the end of the twelfth century, the wholesale exodus of refugee artists fleeing eastern India, which then came under Muslim domination, finally brings the powerful impact of the longstanding tradition of eastern Indian art to Nepal.[5] Anonymous Nepalese artists, who absorbed these influences, were sustained by their religious inspiration, and

Right : The struts of Uku Bahal, 12 c.

seem to have maintained their artistic endeavours undaunted by the turbulence and instability of the period. The degeneration of the political atmosphere, however took its toll in the quality of art. Gradually, in this period, the high quality of stone sculpture declined and, from around the tenth century, metal idols predominated.

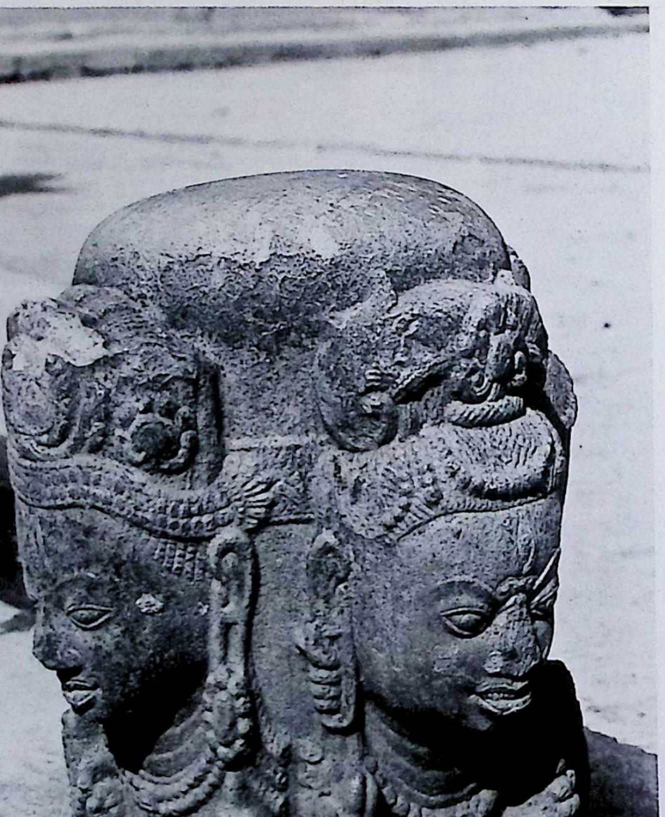
Appropriately enough for a dark age, the period saw a rise in the influence of tantrism, until it became a dominant strain in the religion of the Valley and infected Tibetan Lamaism. This form of Hindu or Buddhist thought takes its name from the scriptures: the 'warps' or tantras. Tantrism had the beneficial effect of bringing about a kind of syncretism between Hinduism and Buddhism. Although its origins are obscure, it seems to have emerged partially as a result of the decadence that crept into the revolutionary reforms that the Buddha introduced in Hindu customs. Without going into the religious complexities of Buddhism, it is possible to simplify and explain the social aspects of his reform. Whereas Hindu thought held that religious knowledge and sacred texts should be limited to the males of the higher castes who wear the sacred thread, the Buddha enjoined that sacred knowledge was the right of all, whether it be women or even the lowest of castes. As a consequence, in Buddhist monasteries, there were nuns as well as monks. In the first few centuries after the Buddha, the fervour of faith and the strength of the early generation of disciples succeeded in maintaining discipline, but as time passed and Buddhism spread, its very size and scope invited corruption, and decay crept into some monasteries. In these monasteries, where nuns and monks were unable to resist the temptations of the flesh, a rationalisation of what was originally a failure of discipline took on the shape of a full-scale doctrine and emerged as an independent philosophy. In essence, the thought can be summed up in this way. Since the objective is to achieve Nirvana, freedom from all temptations, asceticism and denial are not the only way. Denial mortifies and attenuates desire till all desire is dead, and the mind is free to dwell on eternity. It is equally possible to achieve this end by carrying all desire to such excess that one kills the desire by a surfeit of its object. The true tantric devotee must concentrate on the Supreme Being at a point which to others would be the peak of desire. As the Waldschmidts state: "In a similar sense, this movement sees in the sacred enjoyment of love an elevation above the individual, a dissolution of the opposition between 'I' and 'thou'; the establishment of a blissful identification between man and woman and a foretaste of the merging into the Absolute."[6] Logically speaking, tantrism, in its complex and convoluted manner, has a consistent system of thought. Its by-products of necromancy, secret rites and potent magic powers over the material world, gave it added appeal. In the sense that it is the antithesis of asceticism, in that it accepts the weaknesses of human nature — fear, violence, passion, rage and madness — and exploits these very sentiments as resource material to comprehend the profound connections between the microcosm and macrocosm, it provided an easier and a more human means for man's attempt to attain the Absolute. Its mystic syllables (bija), its occult spells (mantra), its prescribed rites (kriya), which included animal and even human sacrifices, its magical diagrams (mandala), and its complex and absorbing procedures

Overleaf: Kalbhairav at Hanuman Dhoka



for meditation (dhyana) provided man with a more palpable mystery through which he could grasp the incomprehensible cycle of life and death. Although aspects of it incline Westerners to see it as a sinister and depraved trend, its great strength was that it reawakened a powerful and ancient religious belief in the fertility cults and in the sanctity of the act of procreation. The profusion of Lingas (holy phallic stones) and of Guheswaris (the sacred representation of the female genitals) in Nepal shows how pervasive this strain is and was. No Nepali associates any lasciviousness in such fundamental representation of the divine.

Gandhi aptly remarks of such observances in India, with that mild sarcasm so typical of him: "It has remained for our Western visitors to acquaint us with the obscenity of many practices which we have hitherto innocently indulged in. It was in a missionary book that I first learned that the Shiva Lingam had any obscene significance at all." Similarly, tantrism, whether in Buddhist form or in its Hindu aspect, was wholly assimilated without the aspersions that later Western viewpoints ascribed to it. It has struck a rich lode in the sentiment of the general people towards fertility cults which reached far back beyond the man-made images of gods to the early numinous stones. This factor accounts for the persistence and popularity of tantrism.



At any rate, the spread and success of tantrism, especially in the Mahayana Buddhist form, Vajrayana, had important implications for the development of Nepalese culture. We have already mentioned how this doctrine emphasised the achievement of the Void (sunyata) or the Absolute (vajra) by means of reciting religious formulae (mantras), by invoking magical powers through concentration and praying to magical diagrams (mandalas), or by means of rites, sexual or sacrificial, which involved Mudras (specified gestures of the hand) and Hatha yoga (particular positions of the body). As a reflection of the Buddhist belief in equal access to the gospels for man and woman, it also gave goddesses an impor-

Left: Chaturmukhi Linga at Patan 10 c.

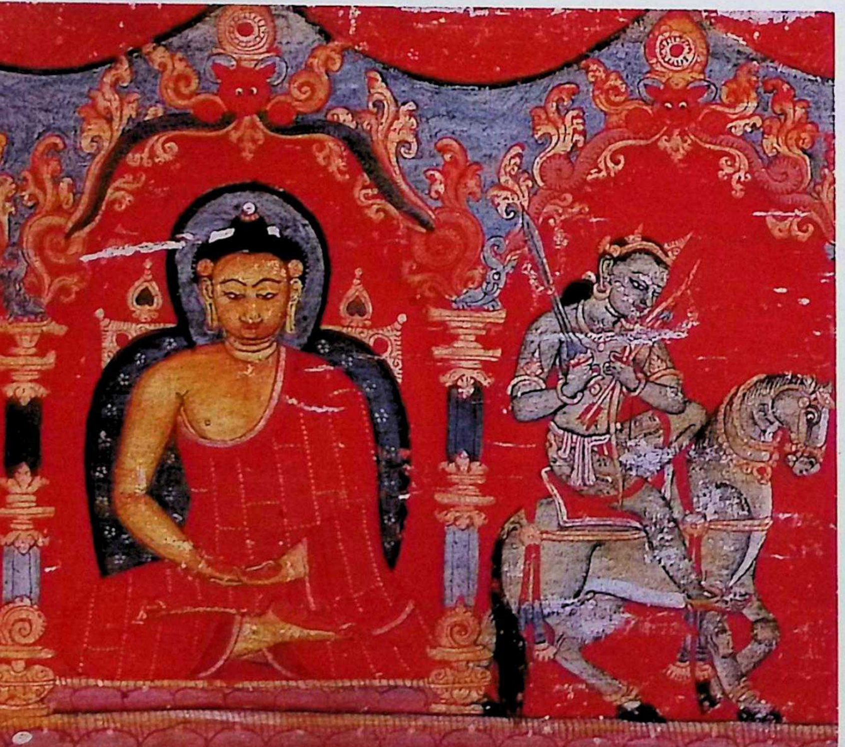
tance equal to that ascribed to gods. The *Mahapratyangiradharani* (a Buddhist text originating around the seventh-eighth centuries in North India) elevates the Tara to the highest of deities[7], and ultimately, if ironically, for the Buddha who gave up everything including his wife to achieve Nirvana, accords to the Tara the position of the consort of the Buddha. This resulted in the high prevalence of both the female figure and principle in art.

The *Mañjuśrimulakalpa,* another manuscript, contains large sections which provide detailed instructions on how to draw the Buddha and Boddhisatvas, as well as on how to draw Shiva, Uma, Kartikeya, etc., of the Shiva cult. It also contains instructions on how to depict abstract conceptions such as Dana (charity), Maitri (compassion) and Prajña (knowledge). Thus a virtual manual for tantric art guided its development.[8] These tantric texts described the many-headed and multi-armed gods and depicted them with dreadful expressions, coupled gods and goddesses in poses of ecstatic bliss, or prescribed complex, almost abstract, mandalas in which exquisite and delicate detail was involved and greatly enriched the repertoire of Nepali artists. The long-standing tradition of Licchavi art had underscored elegance, simplicity and serenity. Even such dynamic figures as Krishna slaying the hydra-headed Naga (seventh century), or the sculptures with tremendous movement, such as the Vishnu Vikrantas at Tilangana (fifth century) or at Changu Narayan (ninth century), all possess a serenity of expression that exudes peace. The figures of tantric art possess a savage dynamism that becomes more pronounced in the later centuries. Gods and goddesses merge with each other in unabated sexual frenzy. They are forceful representations, sometimes exquisite in their detail and complexity. "Tantric imagery ... provided the artist with new challenges both in terms of form and technical dexterity. Diverse images with multifarious arms and legs were not simply expressions of aesthetically satisfying forms, but they obviously afforded the sculptors with marvellous opportunities to exploit their fantasies. In many instances, the content itself was macabre, others involved the portrayals of intricate forms in motion; and often the result was the creation of dynamic sculptures expressing a perfect equilibrium between form and fantasy."[9] Yet to those unfamiliar with these idiosyncratic representations, and outside the tradition of Nepalese culture, tantric art may well appear an absurd mingling of animal and human forms, where limbs and heads proliferate — an art form totally lacking in moderation and restraint.

Such was the first reaction of Tucci, who describes the goddesses "twined in ecstasy with the torso of the male. They hold them tightly in their arms, while all around wheel other arms ... and above them the terrifying heads threaten; the fanged mouths grin and the eyes seem ready to burst from their sockets in ungovernable fury."[10] However nightmarish these representations may appear, however striking their voluptuous carnality may be, the products of their art-style, like all the rest of religious art in Nepal, were guided by ritual texts. Such sacramental manuals prescribed the forms arrived at, with the objective of producing a particular religious effect or some occult result. In this sense, the horror or sensuality of this art may be compared to the cathartic effect of Greek tragic drama. As Tucci himself later amends, "These couplings are intended to recall to the initiate that the primeval androgyne, the one who was in 'illo tempore' when the universe did not yet exist, is the indivisible union of two opposed yet complementary principles, from whose united labour life springs eternally.... These fearful epiphanies show the warlike aspect of divine mercy, which in order to extirpate the evil which lies in ambush all around must assume the same demonical forms to fight with it on equal terms."[11] The latter sentence corroborates the stories in the Hindu scriptures of the various incarnations or *avatars* that God had to take to fight evil on earth. At any rate, this new stream of art, which in time became dominant in Nepal, was introduced during the Dark Ages. The best examples of tantric expressions are to be found in metal figures and paintings; from around the eleventh to the twelfth centuries, the instances of this form appear in plenty.

Tantrism gripped the religious imagination of the Nepalese. It fitted in well with the long-standing traditions of animism and fertility beliefs. As a result, blood sacrifices got entrenched into the religion. In a period of political disorder, when life was often haphazard and chance rather than planned objectives determined the vicissitudes of existence, it was inevitable that beliefs in the occult, in the efficacy of complex rites to obviate evil and to ensure security, prevailed. The predominance of tantrism had a secondary but important byproduct too.

As the long-established story of the famous ninth-century visit of the Hindu saint and theologian, Sankaracharya, and the grand debate in Nepal implies, during the Dark Ages the Valley occasionally reverberated with the sounds of Hindu zeal faced by the tide of Buddhism. So the peaceful co-existence of the two religions (so strong a feature of Nepalese history, both before and after the Dark Ages) may have been marred during this period.

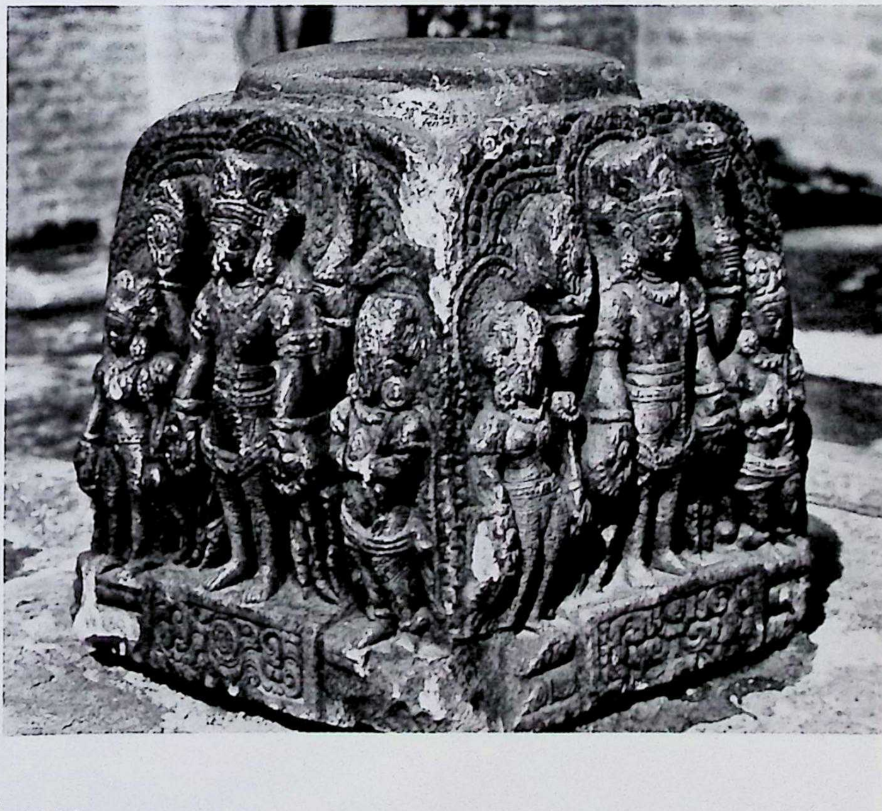


Left : The Vishnu Dharma cover, 12 c.

If so, tantrism, by influencing both religions, may have served to heal the breach and re-establish tolerance.

If tantrism helped to bring together Hindu and Buddhist mores, the need for establishing harmony between the two religions arose because, during the Dark Ages, Buddhism gained a novel ascendancy in Nepal. The earlier mentioned visit of Atiśa, the chief abbot of Nalanda (the monastic university in Bihar which was the most celebrated centre of Buddhism), highlighted the continuous influx of Buddhist monks, art and mores into Nepal from North India. Monasteries multiplied in the Valley, and Patan in particular seems to have attempted to rival Nalanda. The remnants of the numerous viharas of Lalitpur (another name for Patan) are mute and melancholy evidence of this splendid epoch when monks roamed the lanes of monasteries, chanted mantras in their carved cloisters, and produced the most magnificent examples of illuminated calligraphy. The inclination towards monastic life is intensified in periods of disturbance and uncertainty, as the Dark Ages in Europe indicate. Much the same happened in Nepal. Those well-endowed institutions were finely constructed in this period. The surviving wooden struts, such as the graceful ladies of Uku Bahal (in Patan), show a remarkable degree of elegance. The monasteries were probably profusely decorated. Some analogy of the embellishments imparted to the viharas can be seen in the product of a much later period (in the form in which it survives), in the golden temple with its opulent beauty. Apparently, fine murals were painted in such viharas. Time and decay have taken their toll. The failure to restore the murals in viharas was one casualty of the decline of Buddhism in the later period.

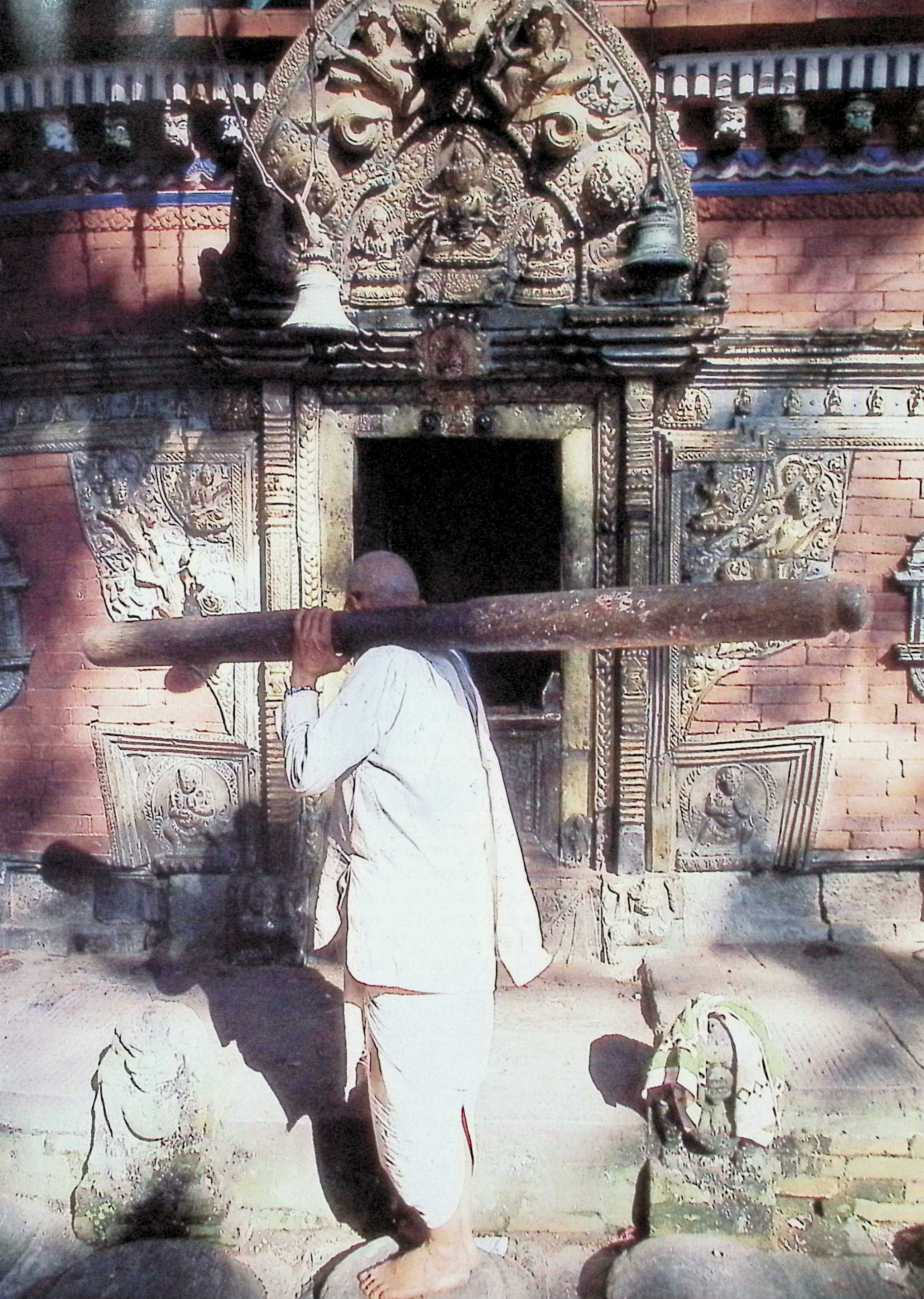
The many manuscripts (most of them Buddhist and some Hindu), which are to be found in the Nepalese libraries and in foreign museums are a cultural residue of this period. The manuscripts of this epoch were mostly made of palmleaf with ornate script, often in silver and gold, against a blue-black dyed background. These manuscripts, especially of the later part of the period, are beautiful works of art, fre-



Right: Chaturmukhi Vishnu at Patan, 10 c.

Overleaf; Left : The Buddha head at Vajrayogini, 8-9 c.

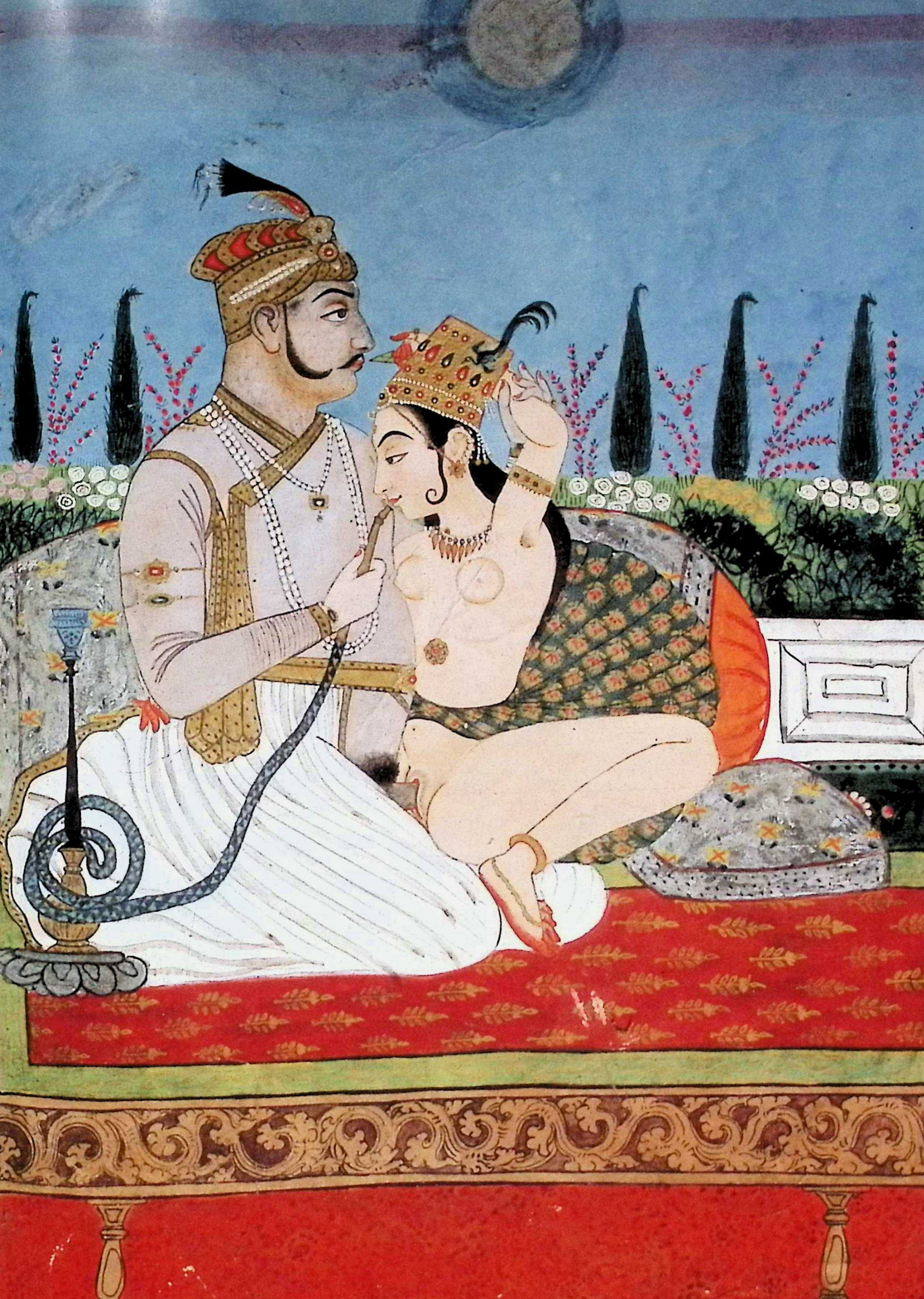
Right: A priest with the Dharmagandhi at Vajrayogini temple



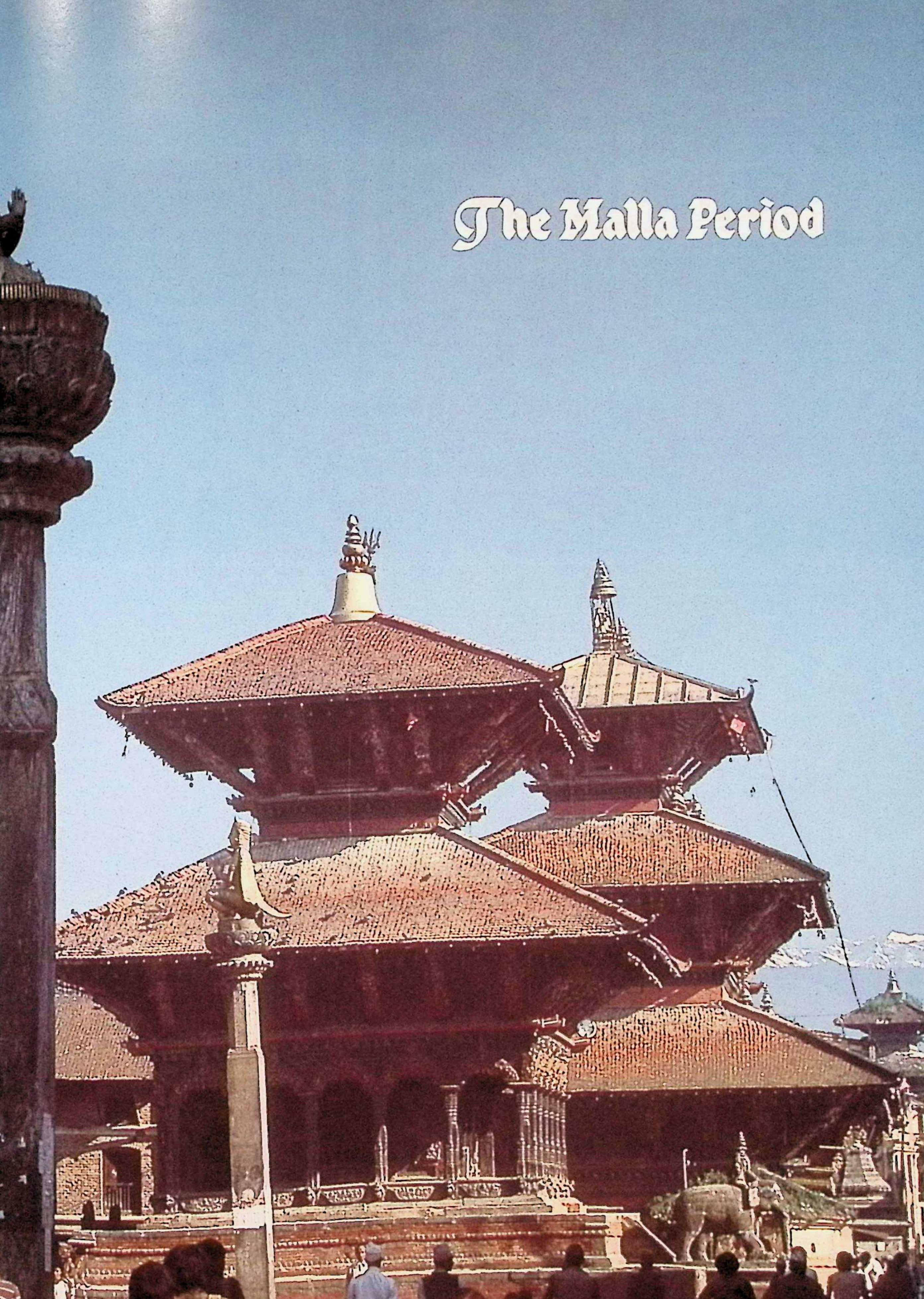
quently embellished with fine miniature paintings. The earliest surviving manuscripts come from the eleventh century. The illuminations of the early manuscripts are of as much aesthetic value as they are historical, in that they are labelled and the labels associate the pictures with shrines in places as far-flung as China and Indonesia, apart from India and Nepal.[12] Although, like most forms of portable art, the majority of illuminated manuscripts have been abducted by foreign collections, two fine early Hindu manuscripts (Vishnudharma Purana and Sivadharma Purana) can be found at the National Archives. It is a token of the paucity of such fine pieces in the country that the covers of each manuscript have been divided between the Bhaktapur Museum and the Archives. Both the covers attest to a refinement of style and exquisite execution which indicate that the tradition of painting was long established.

There is another manuscript, which though is of no great artistic value, is the only Nepali paper manuscript written in late-Licchavi script. The Archives have not yet been able to decide whether this indicates that the use of Nepali home-made paper (in place of palm leaf) was made in Licchavi times or whether this is just an enigma created by the preference of some twelfth or thirteenth century patron for a long-unused script. At any rate, the tradition of illuminated manuscripts continued its creative vigour right upto the fourteenth century. Although other forms of painting then became dominant, manuscripts continued to be produced even during the twentieth century. The later manuscripts are no longer of palm leaf but of thick home-made paper which is enormously resistant to decay. Of all religious paintings it is true that their "pictures, wherein the colours do not have a decorative or pictorial value but are fixed by a precise and inviolable symbolism, are like writings in which the elect may read the mystery of things or the intimations of redemption. They are liturgical treatises or mystical visions translated into the calligraphy of line and colour."[13]. The Nepali manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries derived their style of illumination from the same common heritage as that of eastern Indian manuscripts. But as Pratapaditya Pal convincingly demonstrates, they were not a derivation of the Pala style; on the contrary they contained a 'richer repertoire' than that of contemporaneous streams in North India and displayed 'far more complex compositions which were pictorially exciting'.[14] Unfortunately no paintings or murals from the period survive. But it requires no feat of imagination to relate the influence of the Ajanta tradition to an earlier period and its continuity through the models then to the eleventh century. In point of fact, a tradition of painting seems to have existed in Nepal during Licchavi times, as attested by a mid-fifth century inscription describing a Buddhist temple with paintings on the Kinari Jataka and other subjects.[15]. Thus the dark decades of Nepalese history saw a number of vital developments for Nepalese culture. Sustained by the heritage of the Licchavis, nurtured by transcontinental trade, fertilized by the successive layers of ideas and styles that refugees or new dynasties brought to the Valley, the culture of the Valley evolved a remarkable synthesis that was as opulent as it was idiosyncratic.

Opposite page: A late Tantric miniature



The Malla Period



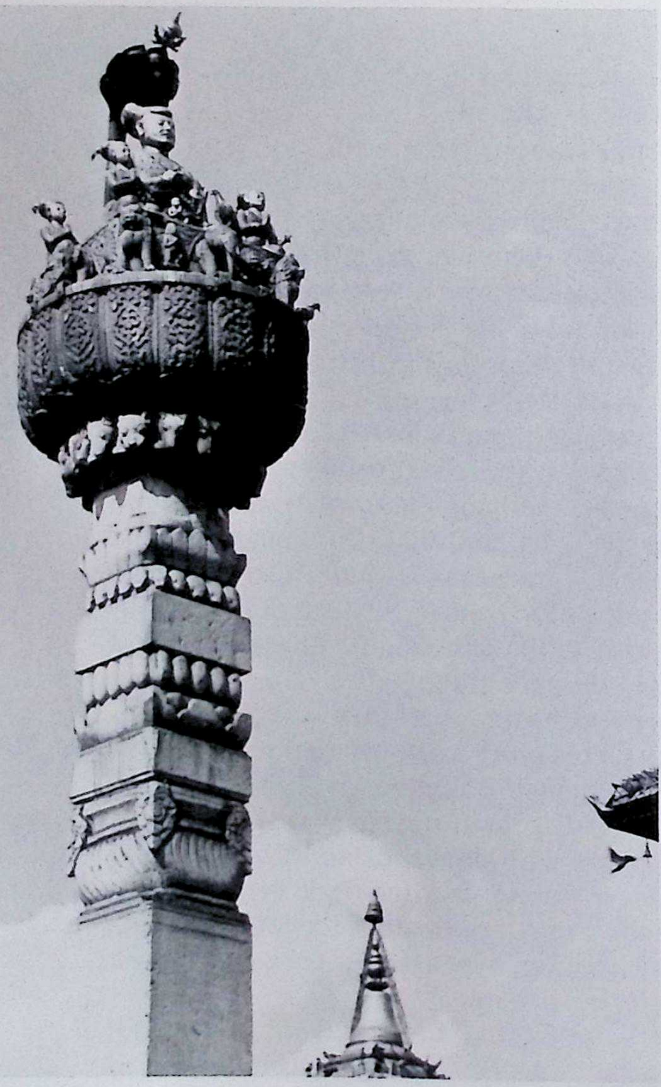
As the thirteenth century begins, the history of Nepal surfaces again, under the rule of the Mallas. These Mallas, whose names have been previously mentioned, dominated the centre stage until the mid-eighteenth century. Essentially, this was the period when Newar art, as we know it, flourished. This highly sophisticated community, whose artisans and merchants had played such a prominent role in past history, and amongst whom were some of the feudatories of the past ages, now come to rule the Valley. It is to the great flowering of art and architecture under their aegis, particularly in the latter half of the period, that we owe the profusion of artifacts to be found today in the Kathmandu Valley. No one who admires the aesthetic beauty of the Valley can ever forget the splendid contribution of this gifted community to the creative achievements of Nepal. It is mainly on their skill, on their traditions, and on the historic work of their hands that the legacy of the Valley's culture rests.

The early history of the Mallas is not one of great stability. A series of invasions shook the Valley and obliterated much of the architectural legacy of the Licchavis that had survived the Dark Ages. The foremost among these incursions were those from the Tirhut kings of Simraongarh.[1] During the thirteenth century there were several devastating raids, and the last attack wreaked havoc amongst the shrines of Patan. In fact, these recurrent Tirhut attacks, with their utter disregard for the sanctity of the shrines of co-religionists, may have caused greater damage to the artistic heritage of the Valley than the single Muslim raid of the period. This took place in 1349, and the Valley was desolated when Shamsuddin Ilayas of Bengal ravaged the Valley carrying fire and destruction in his wake, shattering even the image of Lord Pashupatinath and decimating the stupa at Swayambhunath. Nor were these the only attacks the Valley suffered. Another dynasty known as the Mallas (not to be confused with the Mallas of the Valley) had established a kingdom in the Karnali basin around the eleventh century.[2] The kings, known as the Sijha, had made this kingdom into a major power with dominion over parts of Tibet. This Khasa kingdom also raided the Valley with frequency and persistence for some fifty years at the turn of the twelfth century. However, the latter limited their booty to the possessions of the princes and the people, and paid homage at the temples to the gods of the Valley. There was even a raid from Palpa.[3] At any rate, the number and frequency of these attacks attest to the wealth and vitality of the Valley. Plagues, epidemics and earthquakes were even more devastating. The most devastating earthquakes took place in 1255 A.D., and again, a century later, in 1344 A.D. The latter left the throne of Nepal vacant for three years. That despite the numerous attacks and natural calamities successive raiders could still hope to find more to plunder implies that the trade system continuously replenished the prosperity of the Valley; that it could draw the Siñjahs across a tremendous span of mountainous territory over and over again, is perhaps the best proof of the indestructible opulence of this city civilization.

Historians of the European Dark Ages point out that the best recorded periods are those which were the most troubled. This practice of recording wars, upheavals or

Previous page : Patan Durbar Square, with the Yoganarendra Malla column in the forefront, Krishna Mandir on the left, and Vishwanath temple on the right.

Opposite page : The Patan Durbar Main Gate unusual events and omitting the years of peace and prosperity was perhaps as common to Nepalese chroniclers as to those elsewhere. So, in a sense, all through the thirteenth century and for most of the fourteenth century, the growing clarity of the chain of events is perhaps due mainly to the more dramatic nature of occurrences in this period. If we peer more deeply into the period, a sense of pervasive obscurity lingers. For instance, it is virtually impossible to tell what connotation the word 'Malla' carried, although it is by this name that we know the period. We know less about the antecedents of the Mallas than of the Licchavis. As Slusser rightly points out, "The Nepalese kings who bore the Malla title came from various families and did not properly constitute a dynasty.... The familiar name Malla (is) a label without ethnic or dynastic implications."[4] Nor does any king stand out particularly from the many listed in the chronicles of this period. It is appropriate to mention Arimalla (1200-1236) because he was the first of the Mallas to become a king. The remaining century-and-a-half tells a tale whose complexity can only rival its lack of significance. Different families seem to have seized the Malla title and throne and some kings seem to have originally been vassals from outside the proper precincts of the Valley. It was probably these powerful feudals, such as the powerful Banepa overlord, who were the *de facto* rulers rather than the recorded list of kings. The attrition of royal power created an internal instability that was intensified by frequent raids and invasions. The Valley's inhabitants, however, seem to have been as skilled in the art of survival, as in the non-functional arts. They learnt to bend before the storm of invasion and resurrect themselves into prosperity afterwards. Undoubtedly, they were helped in this by their powerful social institutions such as the *guthi*, transplanted from India in Licchavi times to become a thoroughly Nepalese institution in Malla times. These tightly-knit mutual-help social organisations held the community together when rulers failed and external dangers threatened. The instability and



Left: Pratap Malla, Kathmandu, 17 c.

attrition gradually broke down many Licchavi institutions, so the early years are also important in that they see the growth of new Malla institutions to replace old customs.

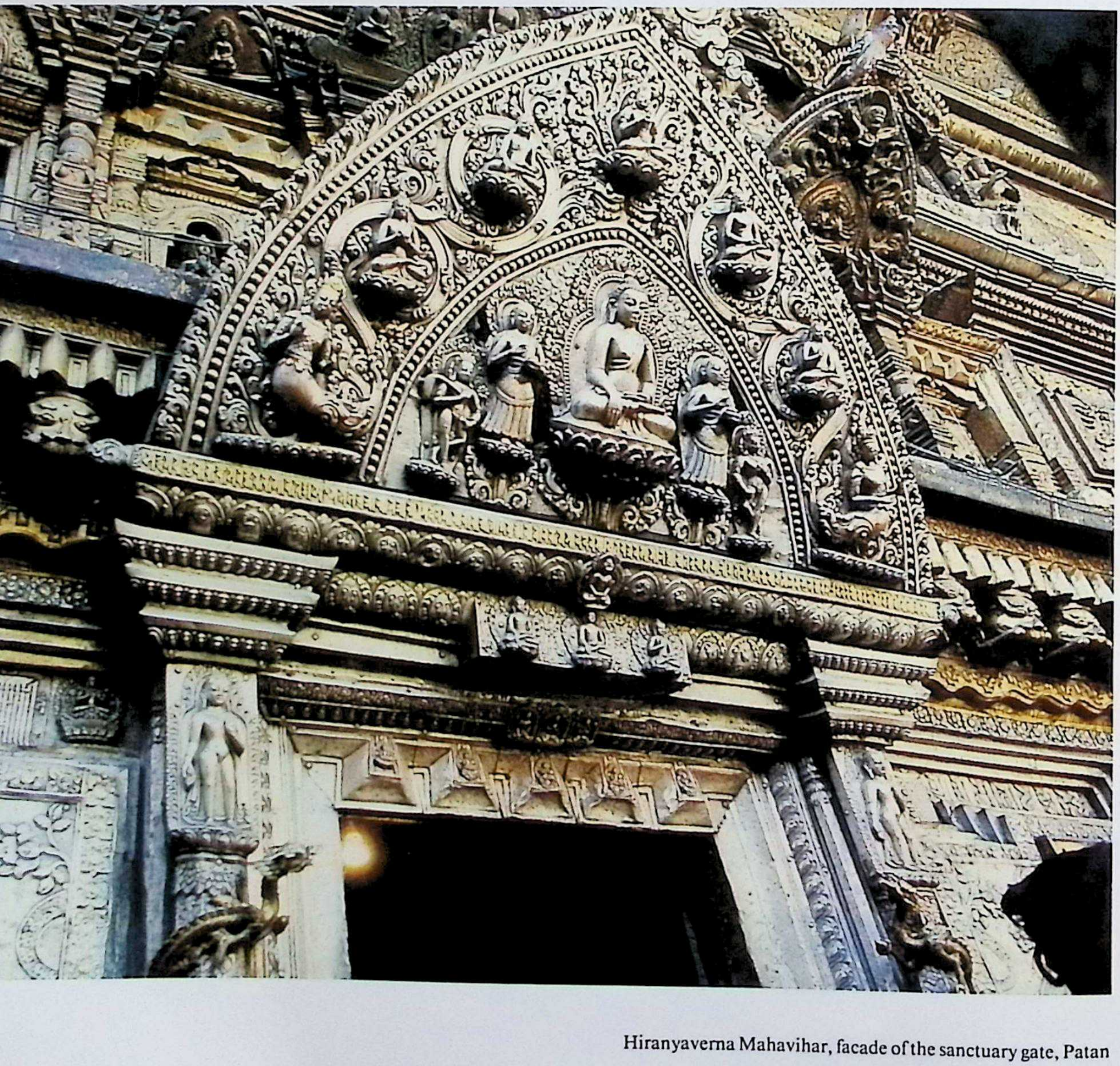
Perhaps the most important political event of the period was the grafting of the Tirhut dynasty on the native Malla lineage. Using diverse sources of Nepalese scholarship, Slusser[5] traces a fascinating story of how a powerful noble of Bhaktapur, Rudra Malla, unified his line with that of the last descendant of the Tirhut kings, and how finally by preserving the role of king-maker in the family for three generations, the husband of Rudra Malla's granddaughter succeeded in usurping the throne. This new *Maire du Palais*, Jayasthitiraja Malla, who took over power had as powerful an impact on Nepalese history as Amsuvarman. Ironically, while the Mithila raids destroyed some of the finest monuments of the Valley, the Mithila admixture to the Malla lineage had significant and positive influence on the cultural development of the Valley.

The strength and resilience of the Nepalese aesthetic impulse which survived all these raids, changes in dynasty, and instability, is best demonstrated by another event which, for cultural purposes, is more important than these political happenings — the transfer of the Nepalese style of architecture to China through Tibet. In 1260, the great Nepalese artist Arniko went to Lhasa as the head of a contingent of eighty Nepalese artists and artisans at the request of Phags-Pa, Abbot of Sakya. There, he erected so fine a golden stupa that the report of his accomplishments reached Kubla Khan. This took him to China where he made and supervised many works in metal, clay and even lacquer. According to Khan histories, so great was his contribution to art and architecture, that he was accorded the highest honour by the emperor. I like to think that it is these tales about Arniko which, in addition to opium, inspired Coleridge to write:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man...

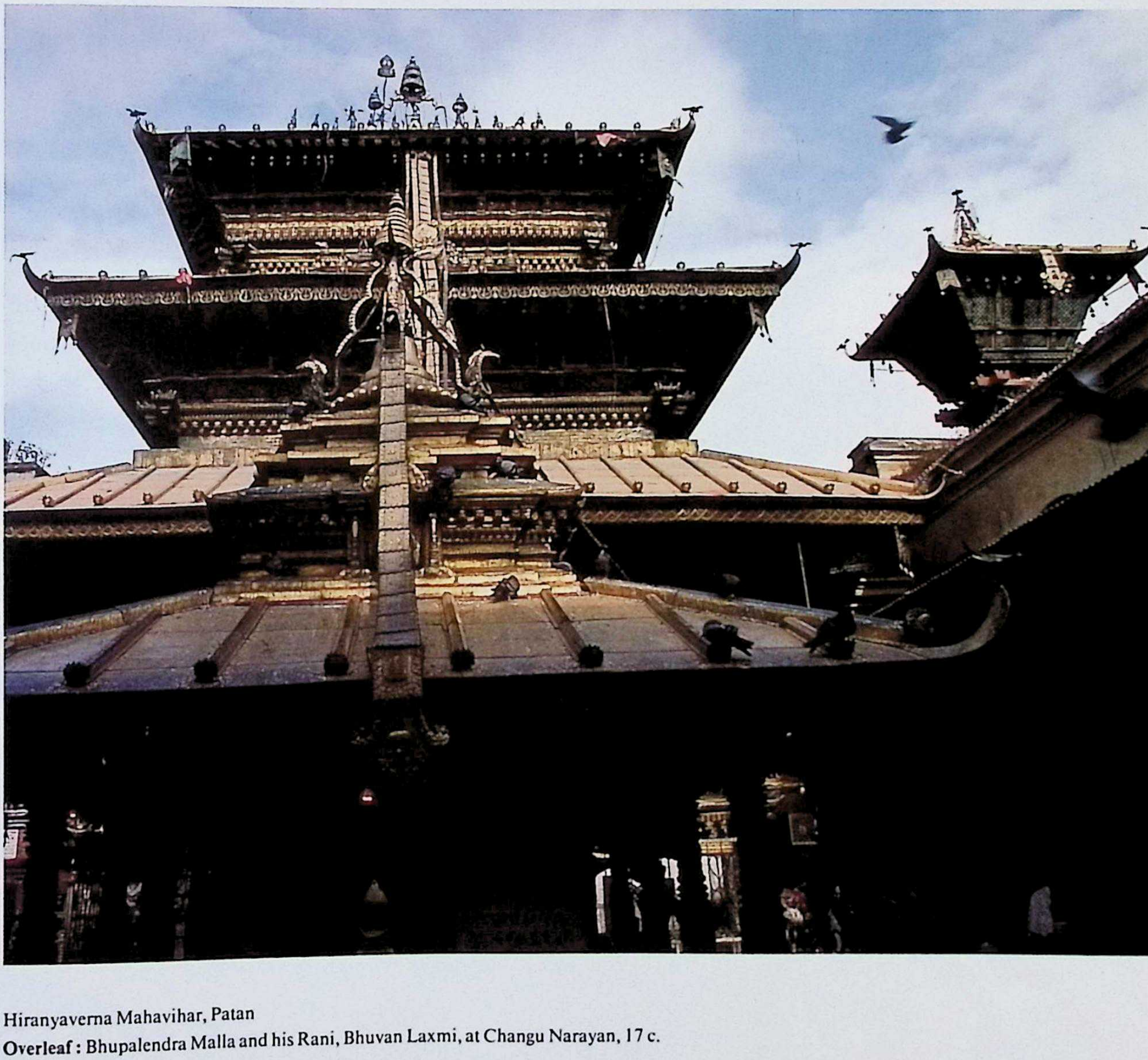
Right: Yognarendra Malla, Patan, 17c.

It is a tribute to the resilience of Nepalese artistic tradition that despite invasions, despite the instability inevitable to the weakening of the central power of the kings, the artisans and artists of Nepal continued to not only create and produce at home, but also to export their art forms and styles to Tibet and China. At this time, the population of the Valley must have been very small (and that of the three cities — Patan, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur — a fraction of what it is today). Although no census figures exist, it must have been around 50,000 to 60,000. Oldfield's sketches of the settlement in the early tenth century show the few houses there were even at such a late stage. Yet, in that small settlement, what a fantastic proportion of artists, craftsmen and artisans there must have been to create the vast profusion of art that is their legacy!



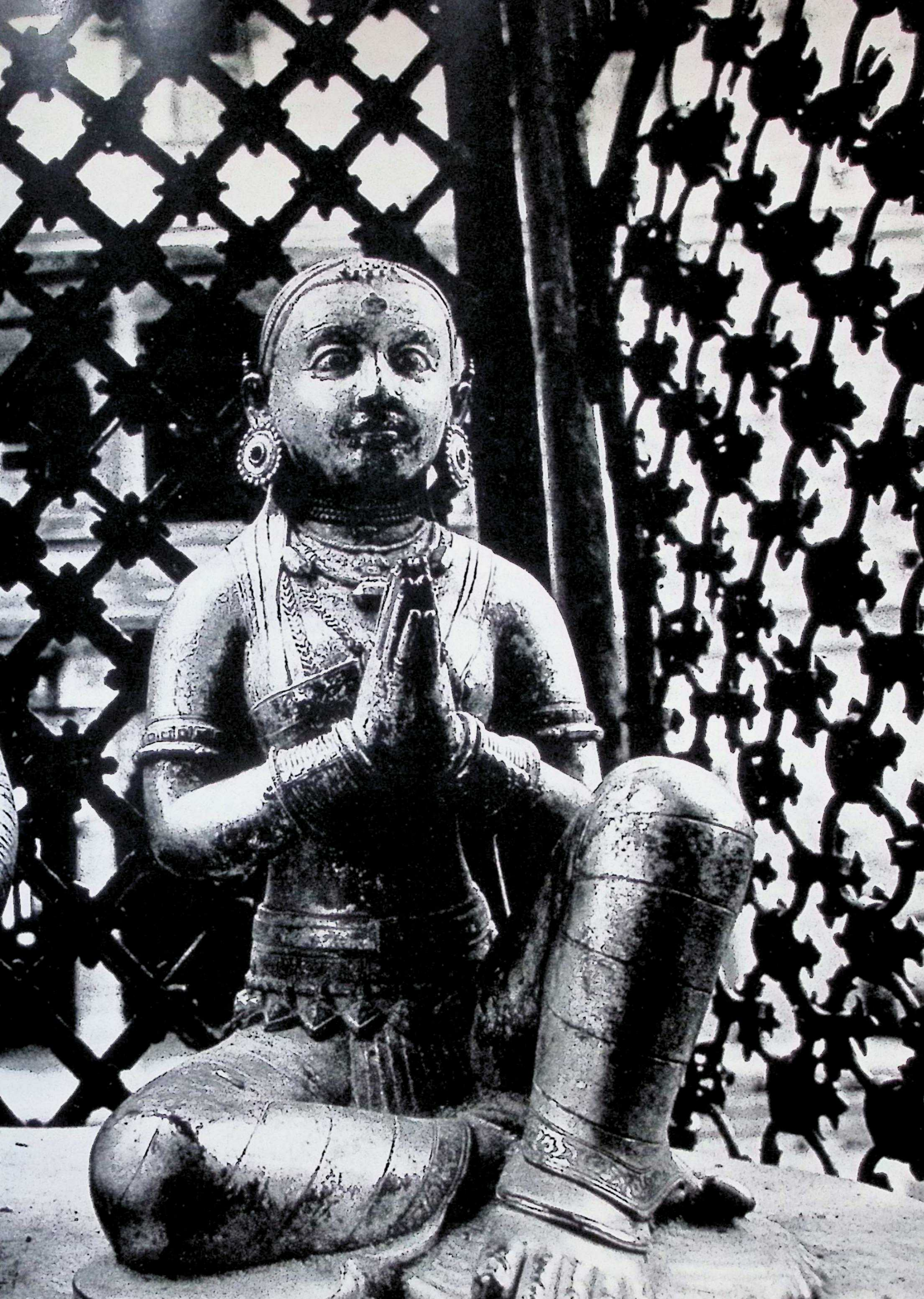
Hiranyaverna Mahavihar, facade of the sanctuary gate, Patan

In fact, ever since the marriage of Bhrikuti to Srong-Tsen-Gambo[6], there seems to have been a significant flow of Nepalese artists and artisans to Tibet. The Newar artists, who alone in the region around the Himalayas were skilled enough to make fine and delicate jewellery, sculptures, bronzes, etc., were probably in great demand amongst the merchants and nobility of the whole region. This monopoly of rare skills (for instance, it is difficult to find examples of the cire perdue technique for casting statuettes in Nepal outside the Valley even in the early twentieth century) must be the reason for the tendency of Tibetan patrons to seek out Newar artists. There also seems to have been a fair degree of exchange between scholars and religious chiefs, not only in Tibet and Nepal, but also through Nepal with the great Buddhist centres in India. Thus the Newar colony in Lhasa came to enjoy a prominent role in



Hiranyaverna Mahavihar, Patan

Overleaf : Bhupalendra Malla and his Rani, Bhuvan Laxmi, at Changu Narayan, 17 c.



the cultural history of both countries. European priests found Nepalese goldsmiths in Tibet in 1626 A.D., and in the mid-nineteenth century they found a substantial body of Nepalese artists in Lhasa. Father Huc refers to "the beautiful golden plates for the roofings of Buddhistic temples; the plates resist all the inclemencies of the seasons and preserve always a freshness and a marvellous lustre. They (the Nepali artists) are so dexterous in this work, that they are sought for from the ends of Tartary to ornament the great Lamaserais."

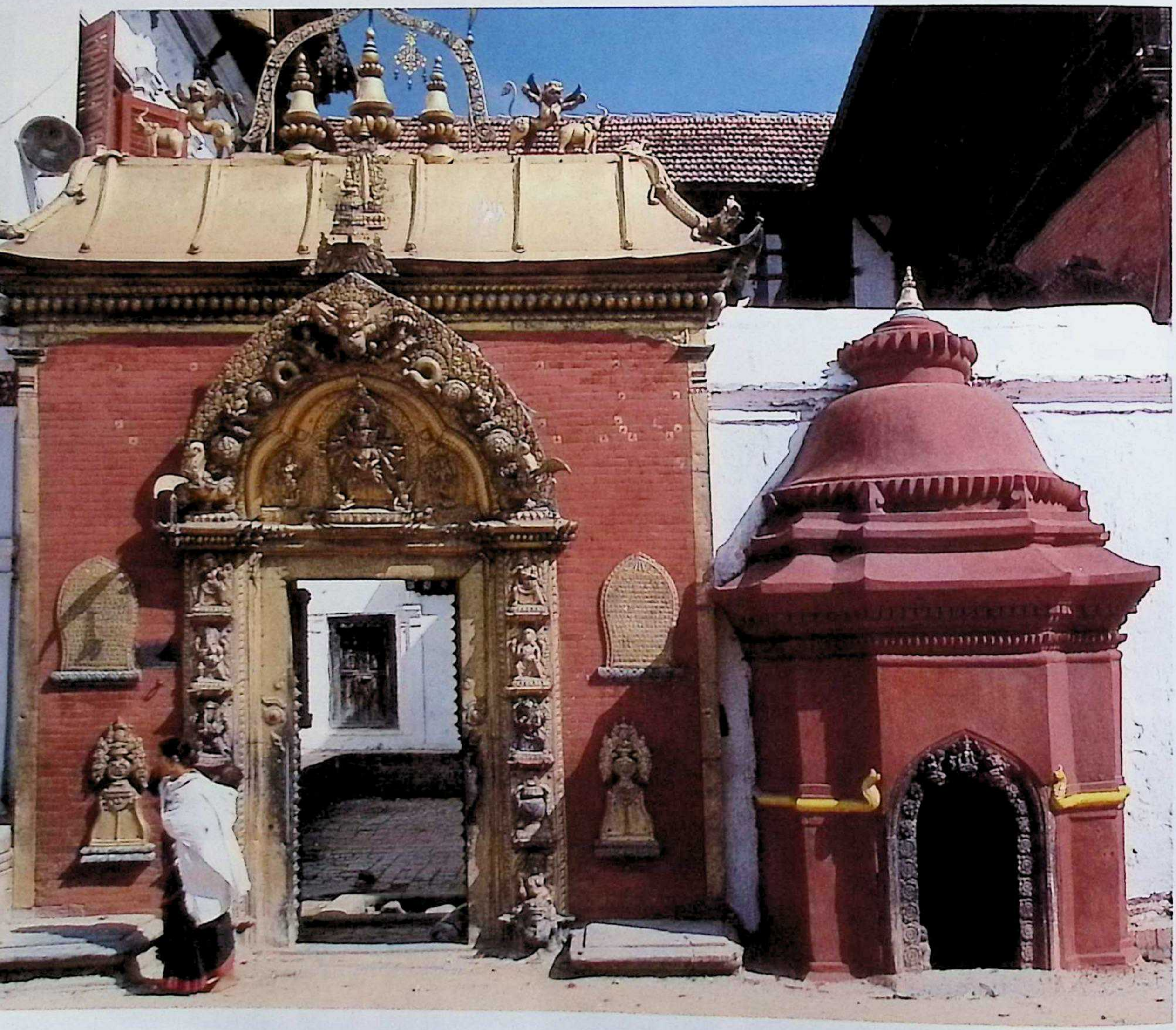
This influence was not merely a one-way traffic. While in the earlier period, the Newars built the monasteries, decorated them with both murals and sculptures, and generally crafted a wide range of artistic products for those who could afford them in Tibet, in a later period we find the influence of Tibet on Nepalese painting and, in the late Malla period, even on Nepalese sculpture.

The architectural style that Arniko exported to China was the ancient tradition, already mature at the time of Wang Hsüan-Tŝe's visit to Nepal in the seventh century. Nothing of the architecture of Nepal from that period survives. When we talk of Nepalese architecture we refer, in fact, to the profusion of buildings that is the legacy of the Malla period. The major forms of these buildings can be categorised under eight headings : (1) the most prolific form is the brick temple with multi-tiered roofs, that is loosely called the pagoda style (e.g. the Nyatopola, Bhaktapur); (2) a brick or stone temple that rises steeply to a tall central spire, known as the Shikhara (e.g. the Krishna Mandir, Patan Durbar Square). While both the above temple types are Hindu, the third type, (3) the Stupa or Chaitya, is Buddhist. In this form, a hemispherical mound of earth is generally covered with lime-concrete or brick, and then painted to form a wide egg-shaped dome; it is then sometimes surmounted with a pinnacle which rises on steps to culminate in a gilded umbrella-type steeple (e.g. the Swayambhu Stupa). (4) The Newar palaces — built with a large complex of courtyards in which temples to the deities are included. These are multi-storied buildings in which the brick is embossed with finely-carved windows and the sloping roofs are supported by delicately worked struts. They often have towers which echo the multi-tiered motif of the first category of temples (e.g. the Hanuman Dhoka Palace). (5) The Newar house is a humbler version of the palace. The houses do not form an independent complex like the palaces, but they adjoin each other on the narrow streets they face. The number of courtyards varies with the size and prosperity of the family. A structure of thick brick-walls, capped by steep tile-roofs and decorated by carved windows and struts is a model common to both palace and house. While they have a lesser number of storeys, most of the common Newar houses possess symmetrical facades. The other forms are (6) the Buddhist monasteries or Viharas (subdivided into the Bahal and Bahil forms), (7) the 'Math' or the house built for the priest of a Hindu temple, and (8) the Dharmasala, Sattal or Patti, built to house worshippers coming from afar. These have been described in many other books in detail and need not detain us. The eight categories are not exhaustive. There are also other miscellaneous buildings which do not fit into this typology. Perhaps the most striking example would be the Kasthmandap —

Opposite page : Nyatapola temple, Bhaktapur

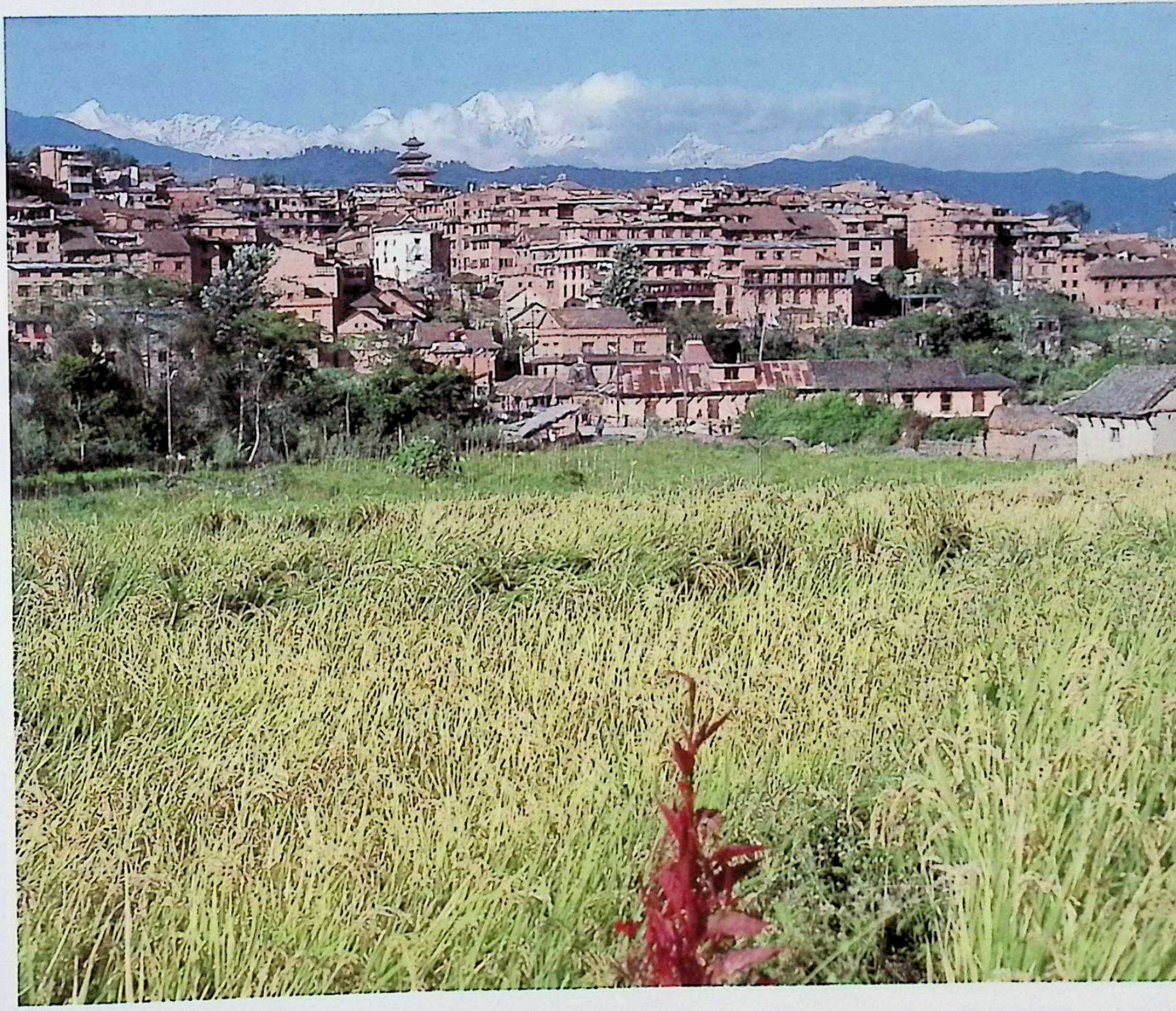
the earliest surviving structure in the whole Valley (A.D. 1143) — the building which gave the name to the surrounding locality (Madu), and then to the city. The Kasthmandap was a public assembly hall. The vast majority of the architecture, however, would be covered by the eight categories.

One of the problems in discussing the origin of the architectural style is that while everybody supposes that the temple with multi-tiered roofs was a faithful replica of the Licchavi style, there are no extant examples of the earlier buildings. The second problem is that, while most of the authorities have followed Sylvain Lévi's surmise that the so-called pagoda or Eduka style was inspired by a style of timber construction now lost in India, there are, similarly, no extant examples of that early Indian style either. That the Shikhara or the Stupa style was copied from India has been



Bhaktapur Durbar Golden Gate

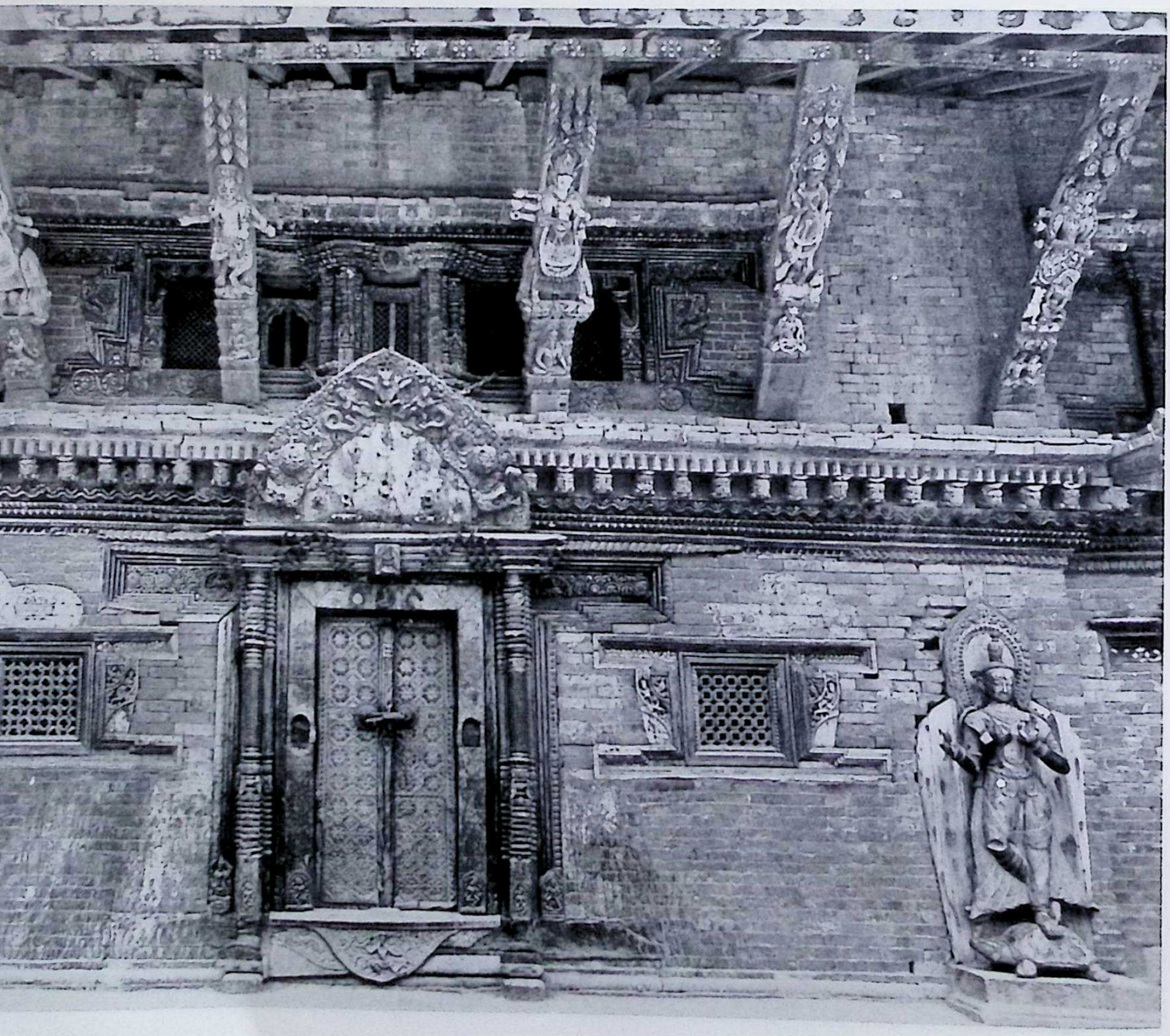
established. In the most recent and exhaustive attempt to define the origins of the pagoda style, Ulrich Wiesner[7] has provided a well-researched backing to Lévi's imaginative hypothesis. Arguing that the earliest extant temples of this style have only two-tiered roofs and a low base (e.g. the Pashupati Temple or the Changu Narayan Temple), he argues that three-tiered and five-tiered structures built on an artificial hill, which themselves were made into multi-tiered plinths (such as the Nyatopola, the Kathmandu Taleju or the Matsyendranath), were a sixteenth-century innovation. So the temples with two-tiered roofs, which contained a cella at the core, an empty compartment in the second storey above the cella consecrated to the god, and a circumambulation around the cella, fits in with a formula which can be traced back to the Gupta period and can be found in Bengal and Kerala as well. He argues that this type



Bhaktapur cityscape

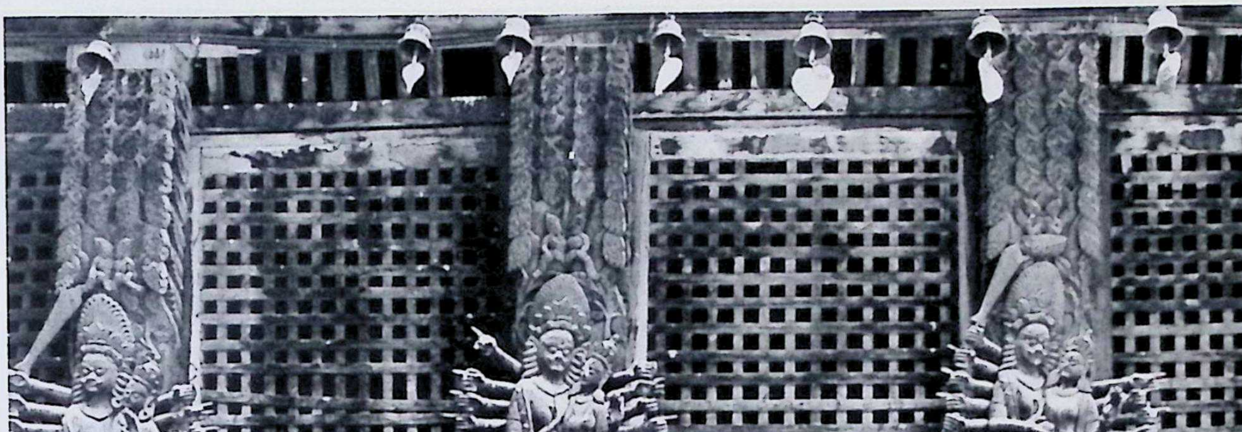
is the evolution of an art form that flourished at the peripheries but was inspired by originals that later died out at the heartland of Indian civilization.

It is difficult, without adequate research, to fault Wiesner's logic and evidence. There is also the additional fact that most of Licchavi art emulated Indian models, so it would be natural to suppose that the same thing happened in architecture. Nor can we deny that the pagoda form had reached as far as Japan around the sixth and seventh centuries. It is difficult to prove a theory that the multi-tiered roof style was indigenous to Nepal and then exported from there through China, during these early centuries. Yet, there are nagging doubts. Although the seven-storied building of great artistic beauty that the seventh-century Chinese travellers found in Kathmandu was a palace and not a temple, the style of multi-tiered roofs, as we find it today at the



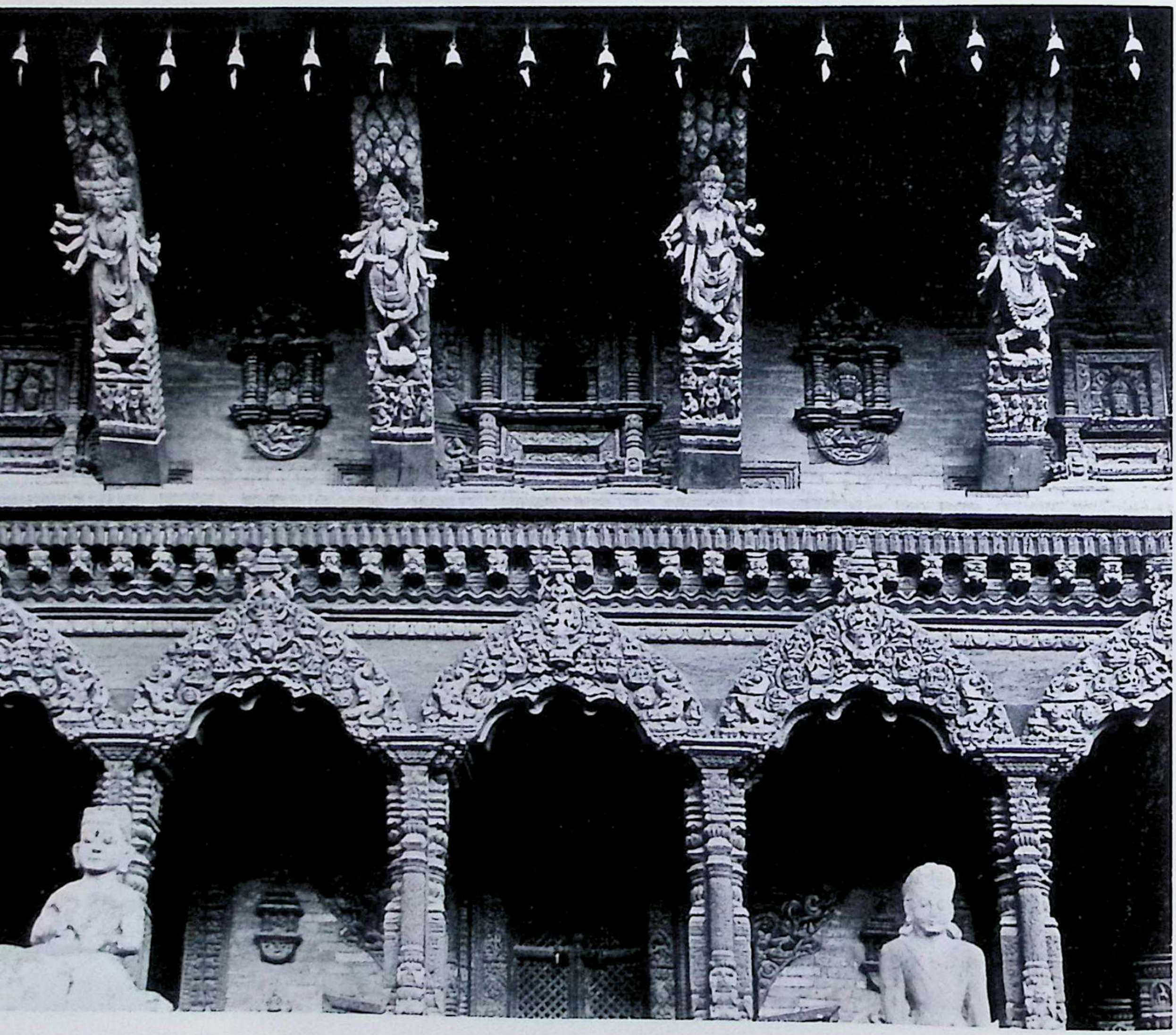
Facade of Taleju Bhawani Temple, Patan

Hanuman Dhoka, is not exclusive to temples. The present shape of Changu Narayan or Pashupati is not necessarily the original form. The argument that the oldest pagoda-type temples were not multi-tiered before recorded time, or that earthquakes ravaged them, is debatable. Wiesner's logic is impeccable, but his assumptions relate to a non-extant example of multi-tiered roofs in India. They are no less heroic than those based on the non-extant examples of a multi-tiered roof style in Licchavi Nepal. Lastly, the architectural style of the Valley — the amalgam of palaces, houses and temples — is so mature and well-formulated that it seems odd to regard so clear-cut a style, with so many examples, as provincial art. Who knows what archaeological research will reveal when it finally gets underway. I am not yet inclined to accept Wiesner's findings as final and conclusive. This style is so well-adapted to the environment of the Valley



Dattatreya temple struts, Bhaktapur

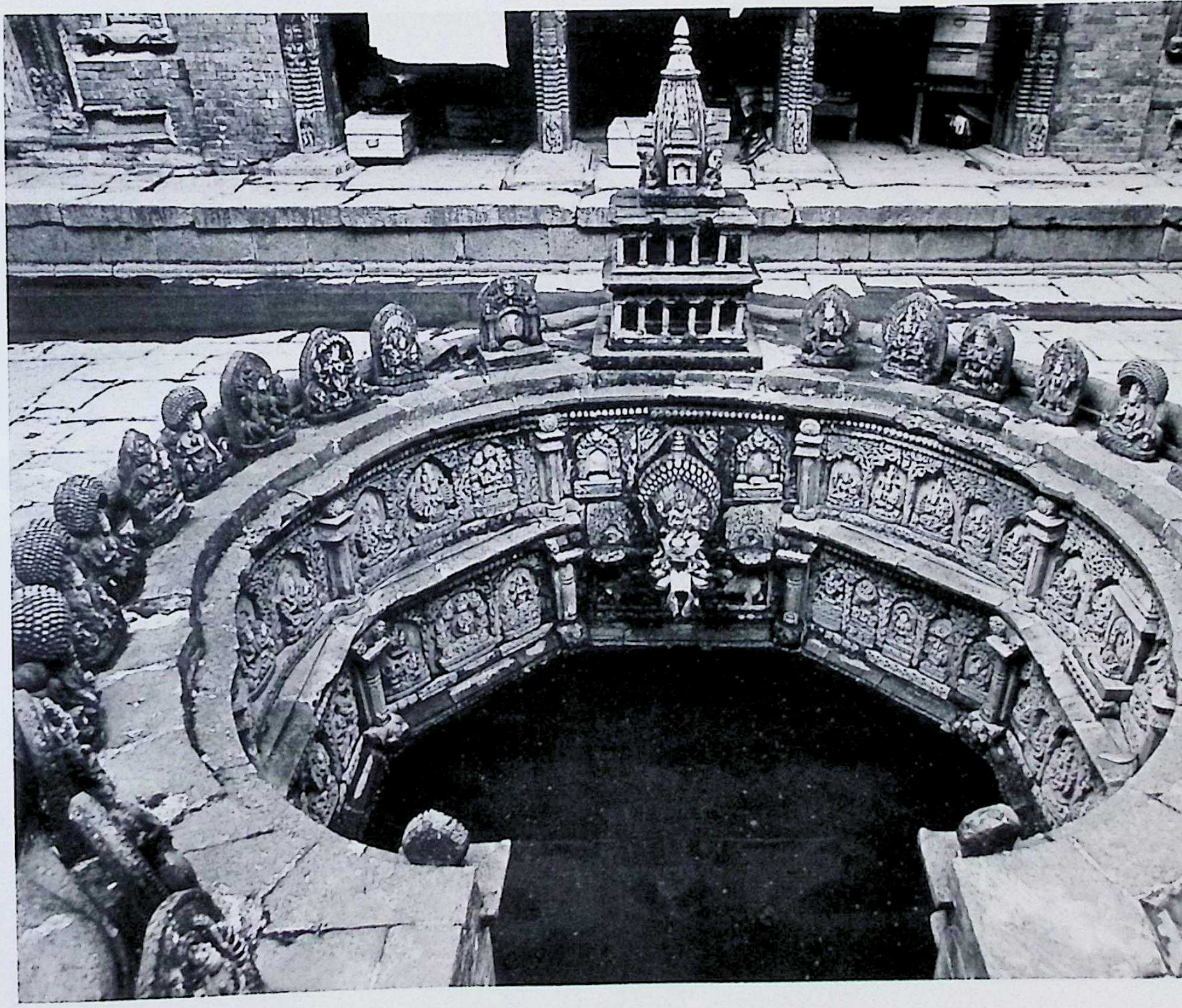
that it is reasonable to consider it indigenous. There is a certain similarity between the style of the Newar palaces and houses and that of the pagoda/Eduka style temples, in that both possess thick mud and brick-walls with steep tiled roofs, and both are extensively decorated with wood carvings. It is not clear whether the Eduka style temples of the Gupta period were of brick and tile. At any rate, the steep incline of the roofs was the best protection against the torrential monsoons at a time when waterproofing was not feasible. Such steep projecting roofs inevitably required struts to support them. The entire mechanics of the structure is based on the combination of brick and wood that is peculiar to the Valley. The heavily carved windows with tiny openings are also intended to protect the buildings from the extreme cold of winter, while the very bright sunlight in the Valley means that enough light



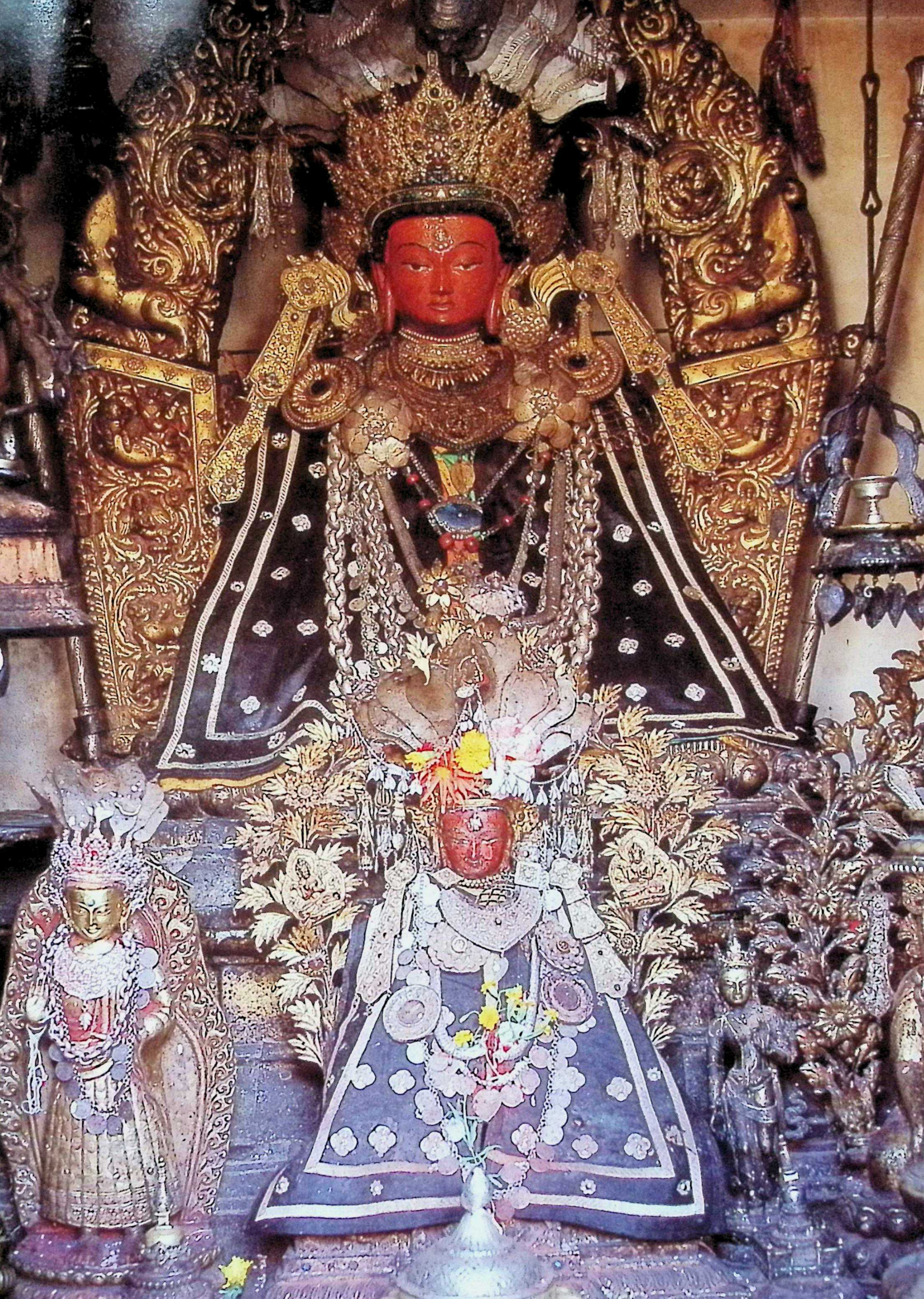
Struts at Vishwanath Temple, Patan

filters in. Nor does it require a particularly vivid imagination to relate the rim of shimmering mountains around the Valley with the tier-upon-tier of roofs in the temples striving towards some sacred pinnacle. The hills, the mid-mountains and the snow-capped peaks in the far distance reach out to the infinite in the same manner.

While Nepalese architecture thus evolved the famous pagoda style, in sculpture, the Sena and Pala modes survived for some time in the Valley despite their extinction in India. By the thirteenth century, the influence of the eastern Indian school had become more pronounced than these earlier trends. More important than these influences was the fact that, whether in sculpture, painting or architecture, Nepalese artists had become the confident creators of their own style. The instance of Arniko and his accompanying cohorts of artisans being invited to China indicates that "by now ...



Tusha Hiti, the elaborately sculptured Royal Bath, Patan Durbar
Overleaf; Left : Dipankara Buddha, Patan Museum, 17 c. **Right:** Shrine at Uku Bahal



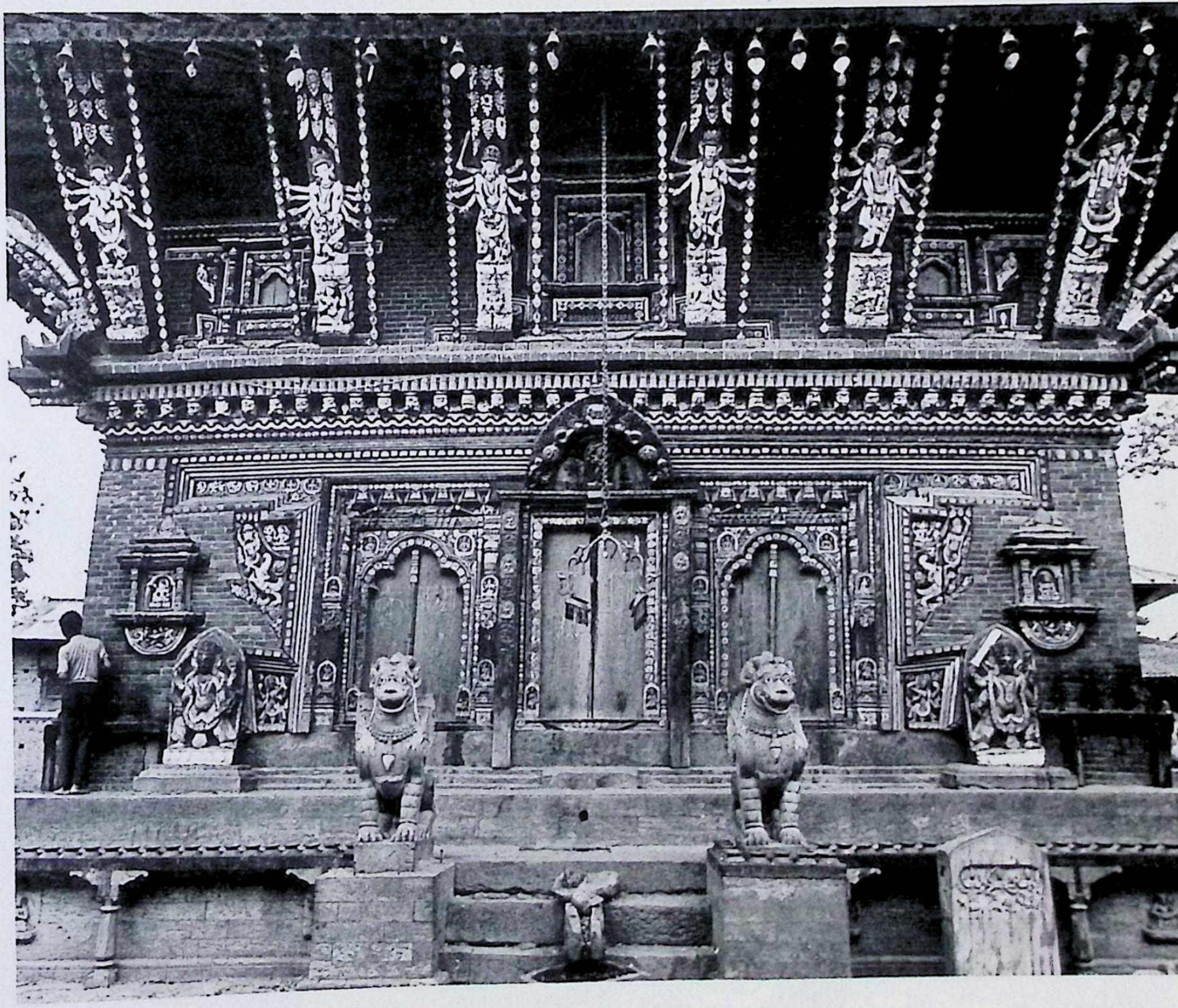
(Nepalese) art took on an unmistakable character of its own. The country was no longer a mere stopping place for traffic between India and Tibet, but had become the starting point and the goal of cultural and scientific exchanges with Tibet and East Asia. In Lhasa, there were colonies of Newars whose work in metal and wood was greatly prized."[8]

This confident new style, best expressed in the bronzes of the epoch, is quite different from the earlier expression. More complex and stylised than the classically elegant figures of Licchavi art, they still retain a slender grace in body and serenity in expression. We note an increasing ornamentation in the figures. The chest of male figures is no longer as broad as in the Licchavi figures, while the limbs seem thicker.

Although the period of the early Malla kings is somewhat better recorded than the three centuries that preceded them, firm records and clear chronology emerge only in the second half of the fourteenth century. With the rise of Jayasthitiraja Malla, stone, copper and wood inscriptions, a profusion of manuscripts, land-grant records, chronicles recording contemporary events with reasonable accuracy and foreign sources, all collaborate to provide a clear-cut historical picture. This clarity reflects, on the one hand, the re-emergence of stable rule in the Valley and, on the other, the simple fact of proximity in time which facilitated the survival of records. Jayasthitiraja Malla's personal origins are difficult to establish. According to Vajracharya, he came from the south and he was probably from Tirhut. The fact that he continues to be referred to as the husband of Rajalladevi (the granddaughter of that great feudal lord and king-maker, Rudra Malla), implies that he had no royal pretensions of his own.[9] He had personal qualities which made his origins immaterial. Bolstered by his marriage to this descendant of the famous Tirhut king and king-maker, he became the power behind the throne. In the course of time, he became co-ruler and then, finally, king himself. In all these echelons, he effectively held power over the Valley from 1370 to 1395.[10]

The story of his sway over Nepal is essentially the story of growing central power in which he gradually checked the power of great vassals like those of the 'Mahapatras'[11] of Patan. This he achieved sometimes by force, and sometimes by policy. He did not hesitate to offer high office in return for acknowledgment of fealty to him as monarch, as in the case of Jayasimhavarma of Banepa. This growth of monarchic ascendancy restored stability. What is more important for our purpose, the process of building temples and of patronising the arts had recommenced in a big way. The Stupa of Swayambunath, destroyed by the Muslim attack, was restored. Although Jayasthitiraja Malla is often said to have introduced a carefully regulated caste system on the Brahmin model from India, all he probably did was to codify the regulation of a system of differentiation based on occupation that had long been inherent in the customs of the land. That occupation determined caste was a fact accepted since Licchavi times. However, as a Maithali immigrant from the south with much stricter ideas of Hinduism, he probably felt the urge to reform and reassert Hindu social idioms amongst the looser structures of Buddhist communities. This attempt to provide a cadre for society in which both Hindus and Buddhists of different ranks had their definite niche and clearly delineated rights and duties was the first of his many regulatory reforms. Jayasthitiraja was not only a strong monarch but a great legislator. This reordering of society and reassertion of Hinduism accelerated the process of Hinduisation and may well have caused many Buddhists to accept Hindu norms, gods and rituals.

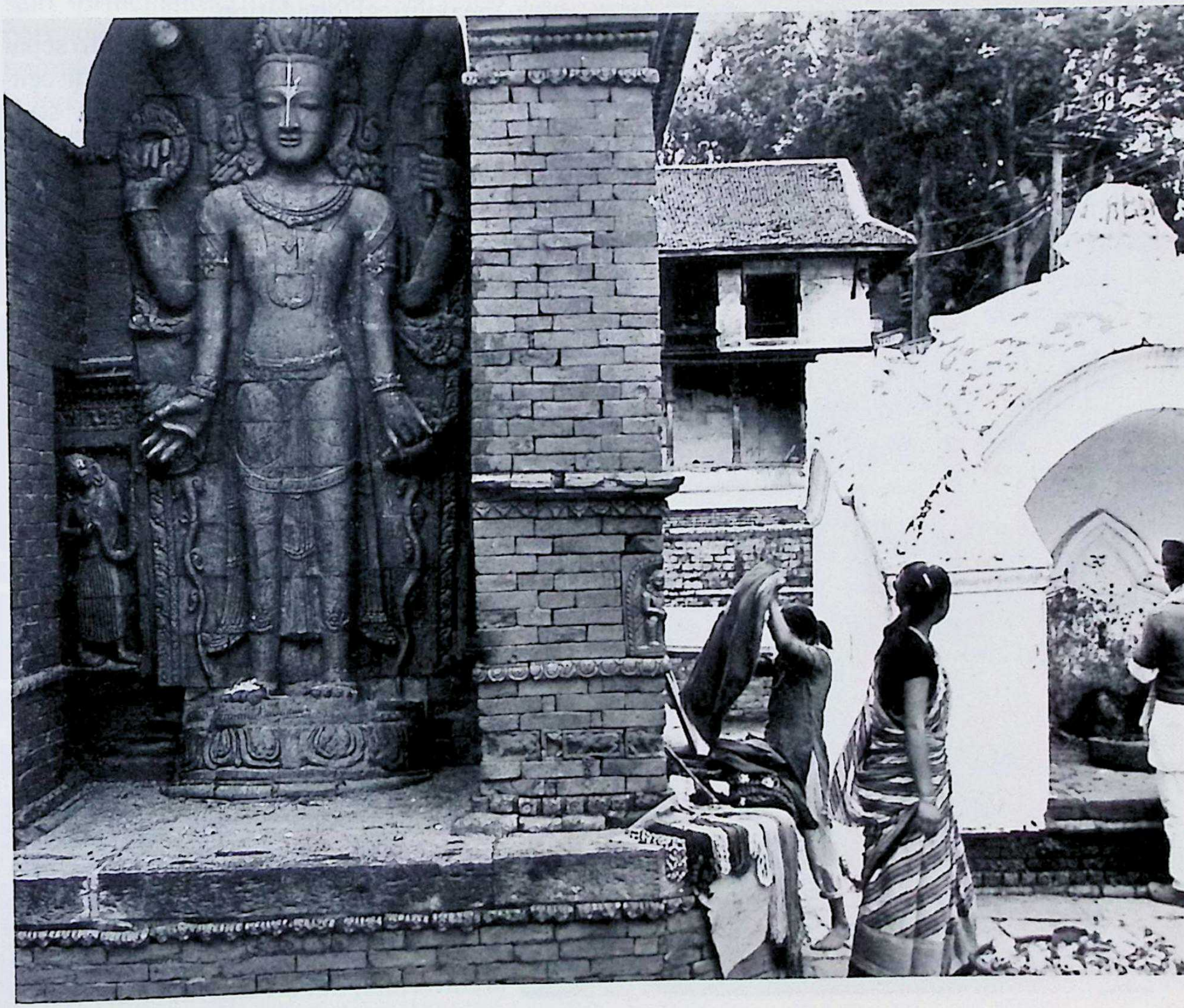
This remarkable monarch, despite his unremitting efforts, never succeeded in establishing a truly centralised state. Nuwakot or Pharping were fiefs that acknowledged his *de jure* dominion but, in fact, held all power over their areas themselves. And Banepa was in effect a Burgundy, a state within a state. So powerful and wealthy were these lords of the 'Bhotarajya' (literally, Tibetan kingdom : the other name



The Changu Narayan Temple

for Banepa) that they built not only Indreswara-Mahadeva at Panauti and contributed to such other art works, but also donated a new 'Linga' for the Pashupatinath temple to replace the one smashed by the Muslims. To be able to restore the principal idol of the Valley, instead of allowing the king to do so, shows how powerful and prestigious they were.

Jayasthitiraja's stability continued and was consolidated for another two generations. In fact, his grandson, Yaksa Malla, actually extended his dominion, finally destroying the great lords of Banepa. He alone among the Newar kings was able to attempt forays outside the Valley. This shows that the kingdom handed over by Jayasthitiraja had the potential for growing in strength. Unfortunately, the stratagem for succession employed by Jayasthitiraja to maintain unity amongst his sons (that of



Opposite page : Ganga, the holy river, depicted as the giver of life, here in bronze

Above : Shiva in terracotta at Pashupatinath joint rule which worked so well with his sons), failed completely when employed by Yaksa Malla. The sons of Yaksa Malla, instead of collaborating, institutionalised a feud between the three city-states of the Valley. For three centuries, the state of Nepal was divided into a number of city-states with a penchant for intrigues and bickering, mitigated from time to time by short-lived collaboration or harmonious co-existence.

Whatever the shape and size of the state, Jayasthitiraja gave the Valley a dynasty which, with various vicissitudes, lasted for four centuries. Some writers have argued that the strait-jacket of castes which he imposed destroyed the elasticity and assimilative power of Newar society. But later Nepalese art does not reveal a hardening of the arteries. Nepalese artists were still open to new influences. The bulk of our heritage comes from this late Malla period, the four centuries for which Jayasthitiraja laid the political foundation.

The division of the Valley into separate kingdoms in the late fifteenth century coincides with a change in style which has been referred to as late Malla art. The figures become more squat and the lower part of the body takes on weight. In Kramrisch's phrase, they become 'earthbound' with a marked Mongol caste to the features. As we move to the sixteenth century the élan of creation, in a sense, seems to have shifted away from stone to the mediums of wood and painting. The figures in stone and metal grow more and more stylised, losing their natural grace of movement and freezing into stiff draperies. Conformity to rigid prescriptions seems to have suffocated personal expression. The brooding spirit of tantrism now begins to dominate artistic expression, and the powerful force released by this demonic spirit emotes the images.

Amongst Jayasthitiraja's successors, Yaksa Malla, the last Malla to rule over the unified Valley, was a great builder and restored many of the temples and other buildings destroyed during the Muslim invasion. He also built water conduits, canals and wells. Not only architecture, but art and literature testify

Left : Kumbheshwar Mahadev temple, Patan to the prosperity of his reign and his liberal patronage of culture. Newari became the official language of the court in his reign. After his death, the division of the Valley into three principalities, so disastrous for the future of this dynasty, did not impede the development of the arts. The trade with Tibet and India that provided the economic base for this artistic expression continued unabated, and there may actually have been an intensification in artistic activities as the three rajas vied with one another to build palaces and temples and to ornament their interiors. Just as the Italian city-states in Europe, despite their division, became the fountainhead of a tremendous flow of art, so did the city-states in and around the Valley become the source of a perennial stream of art.

The history of the Valley after the division of the kingdom into the aforesaid principalities, becomes so complex and entangled that, in view of the comparative insignificance of most of the rulers of these small principalities, it is not worth our while to detail their names and deeds. Those interested can consult the writings of Regmi, Petech and Dhanavajra Vajracharya *et al.*, to trace this 'tangled tale' of feuds, squabbles, intrigue and temporary alliances between petty princelings. After collegiate rule between the sons of Yaksa Malla, over time the Valley split into the three principalities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. In fact, Banepa (the Bhotarajya) also broke away to become a separate principality and only returned to the domain of Bhaktapur in the mid-seventeenth century. Pharping and Nuwakot also varied between allegiance to Patan, Kathmandu and an independent existence. The desire to control trade routes, the main source of prosperity, meant that whenever possible, Kathmandu would try to bring Nuwakot (the Keroung route to Tibet and the territories that flanked the Sunkosi river) under its sway. In Patan, on the other hand, the nobles were so powerful that for most of the sixteenth century they needed no king or overlord. However, around the seventeenth cen-

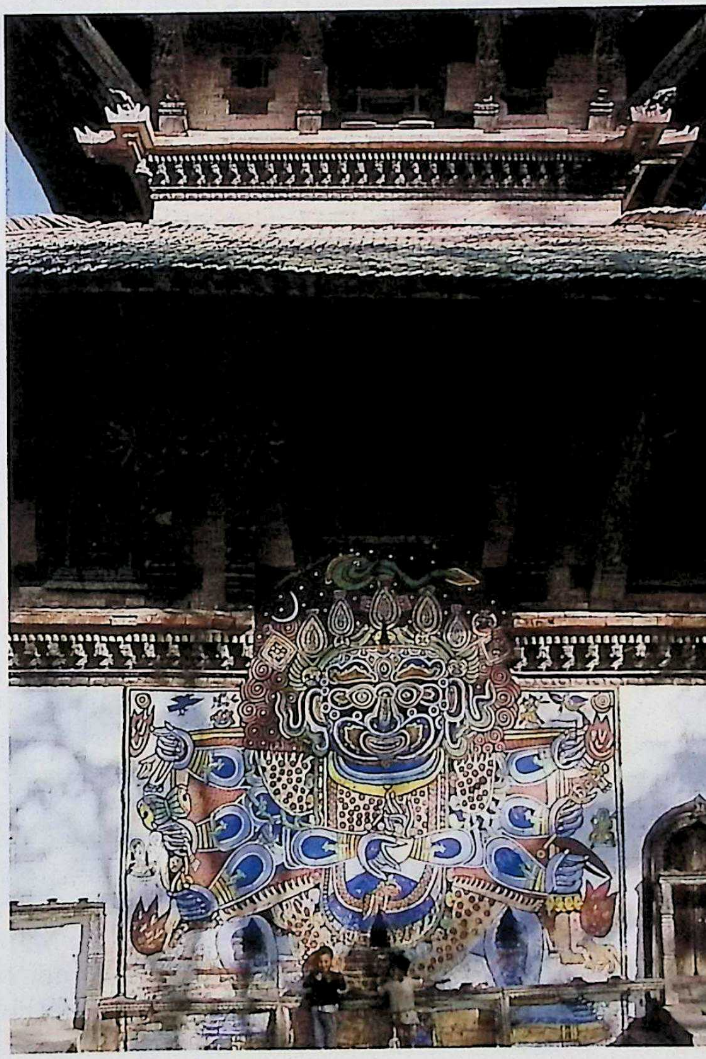
Right: Mahabauddha terracotta temple, Patan tury, the situation became somewhat simpler with the three city-states of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Patan more or less consolidating their hold over the outlying cities, all under the rule of different branches of Malla scions. While this fact makes the lines of history easier to follow, it did not palliate the wrangling among the Mallas. The situation was typical of the French saying, *cousinage c'est dangereuse voisinage* (it is dangerous to have cousins as neighbours). Gradually, their quarrels became entangled with the strife between neighbouring principalities, such as Makwanpur to the south and the Khasa principalities to the west. (These were the so-called 22 and 24 principalities established in west Nepal by immigrants claiming descent from the Rajputs of India.) This was to be the last and fatal phase, for amongst the hardy hill states, a growing knowledge of the effete Valley civilization bred ambitions that led to the liquidation of the Newar states. In the interim, the princes of the Valley lived within their walled cities, like the guardians of a luminous tradition.

Amongst the multitude of rulers of these principalities, a few stand out. Bhupatindra Malla (1696-1722) of Bhaktapur completed the palace complex adjacent to Durbar Square and the famous five-storeyed temple of Nyatapola, giving to future generations some of the finest examples of Newar architectural achievement. Two kings of Lalitpur or Patan share the credit for creating the Patan Durbar complex in its present shape. Siddhinarsimha, the father, and his son Srinivasa ruled, between the two, for 65 years (1619-1684). The father rebuilt the Degutale temple, the Sundari-chowk with its beautiful sunken bath and famous gilt spout; the courtyard of this chowk is a fine example of the prevailing wood-and-brick architecture. He is also responsible for an adjacent annexe (called Bhandarkhal) with gardens, a tank and fountain for the Taleju. He also built the elegant stone Shikara dedicated to Krishna, which is perhaps the finest of its type in the Valley and the Visweswara temple. His son followed him and reno-

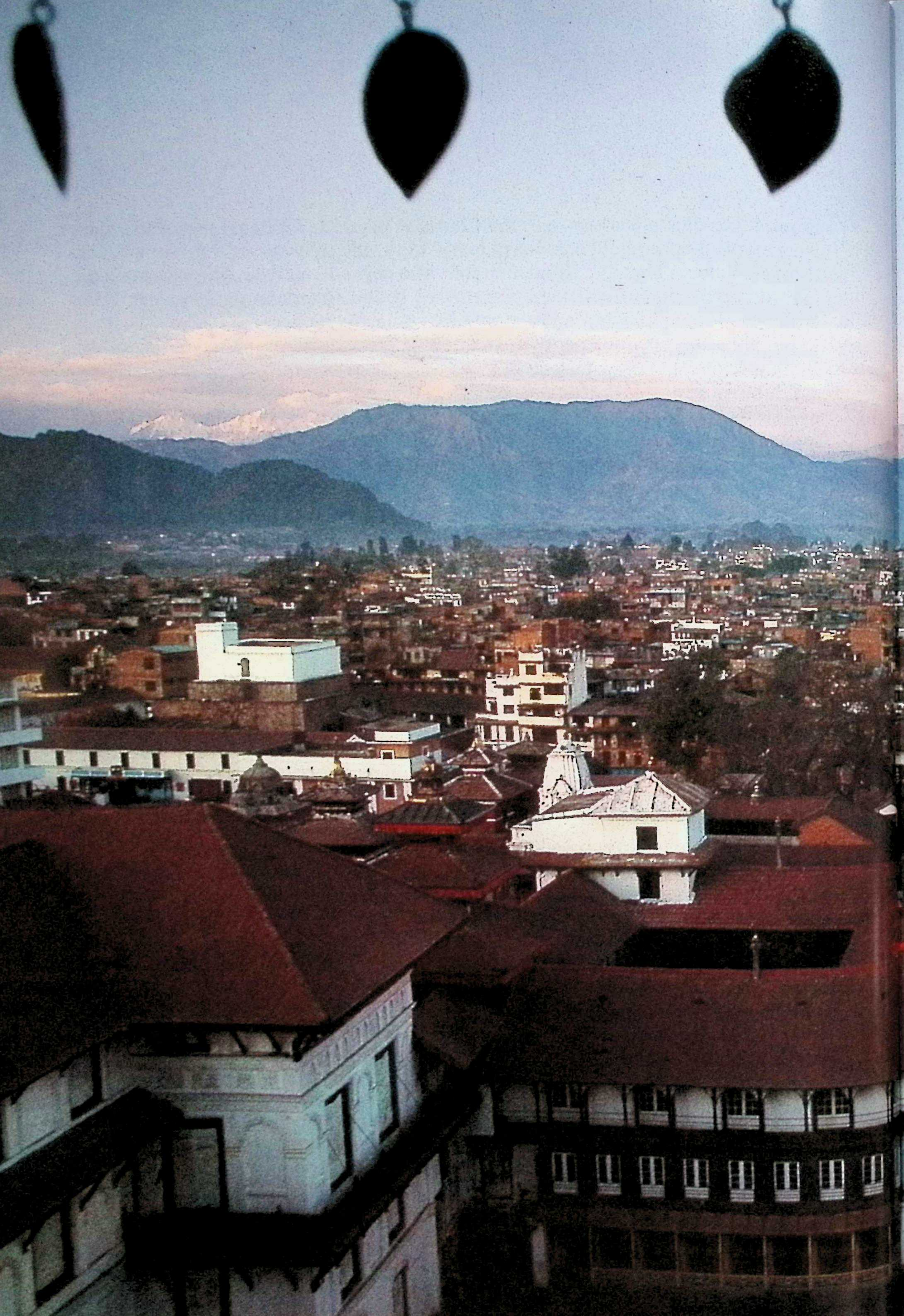
Left : Bronze Garuda, Patan

vated the palace complex from one end to another, starting with the Degutale which, within a few years of its completion, was gutted by fire. (This temple was rebuilt again after the 1934 earthquake.) He carried out a major restoration of the Mul-chowk, introducing a Taleju temple into the courtyard, and built the Bhimasena temple. Much of the beauty of this most magnificent of the three Durbar squares was the contribution of these two kings. The name of Yoganarendra Malla (1684-1705) stands out not so much because of his life and achievements but due to the quaint and mysterious manner of his posthumous rituals. He left orders that until the brass bird on the hand of his statue flies away, he was to be treated as if alive. Until a couple of decades ago, a mattress was placed in his favourite room every night and the window left open, just in case he who had disappeared so mysteriously, returned. How lovely Patan was, we can guess from the haunting evocation of that city, written by Lévi, a century after the Gorkha conquest: "But the last remains of a dying past still call forth visions of dazzling beauty. Who could describe this jewel, this Durbar Palace? Under the living brilliance of a sky that still leaves the eye undazzled, the royal palace spreads out its front, enriched by the hands of sculptors and carvers glorying in their work. Upon it the hues of gold and red and blue light up the darkened timber, and over against it in the centre, like the idle fancy of a great artist, is a world of almost luminous white stone, of pillars crowned by bronze statues, of light filtering colonnades and of fragile dream temples guarded all by a company of fantastic beasts, chimeras and griffins."

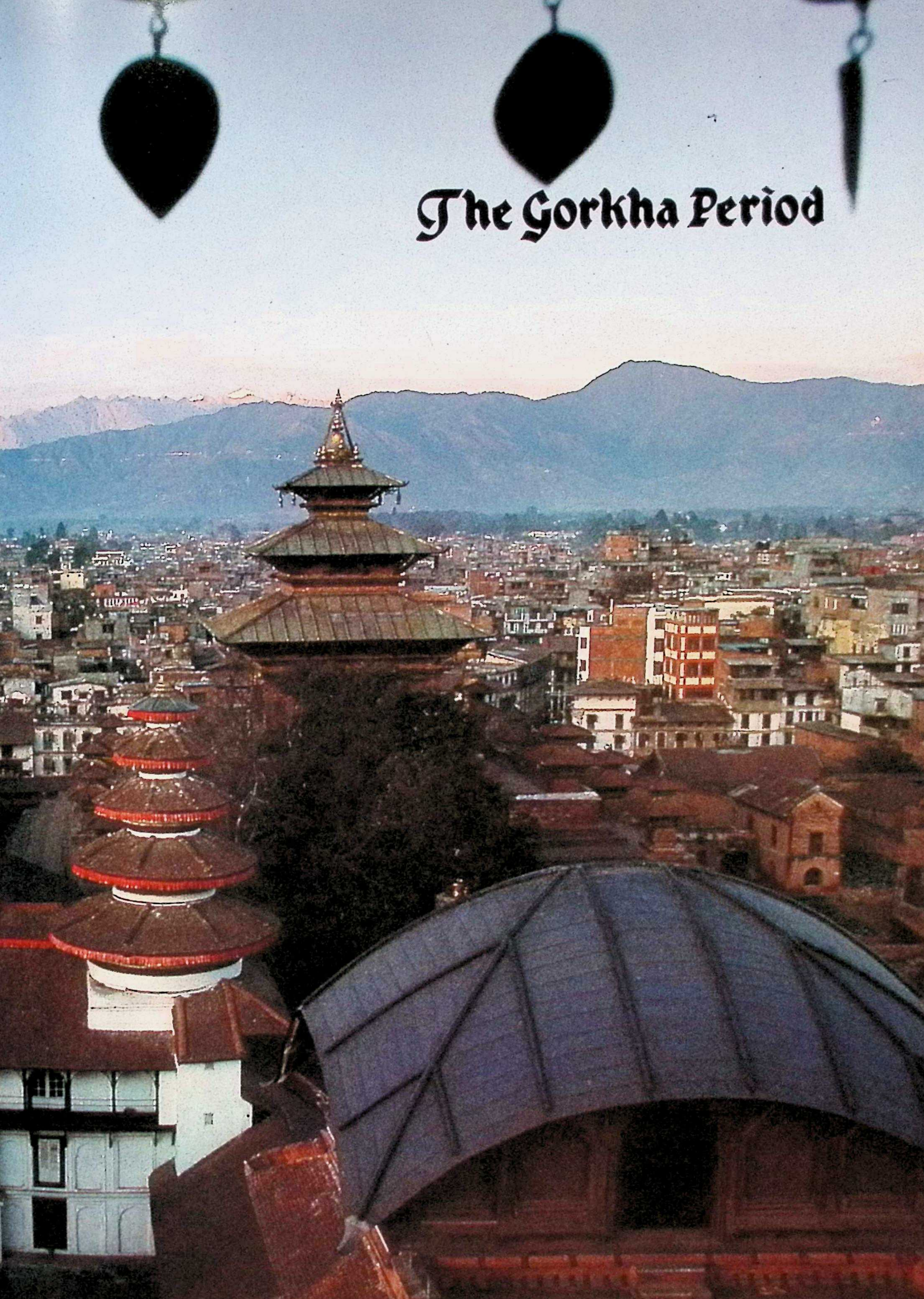
Amongst the rulers of Kathmandu, the name of Mahendra Malla (1560-79) is pre-eminent for the coins which he minted, and which were used as a currency by the Tibetans. He provided a typical example of competitive building by erecting the Tulaja Devi temple in Kathmandu after he saw such a temple on a visit to Bhaktapur. In point of architectural achievement, however, Pratapa Malla (1641-74) far outstrips him. It is this ruler who added Mohan Chowk,

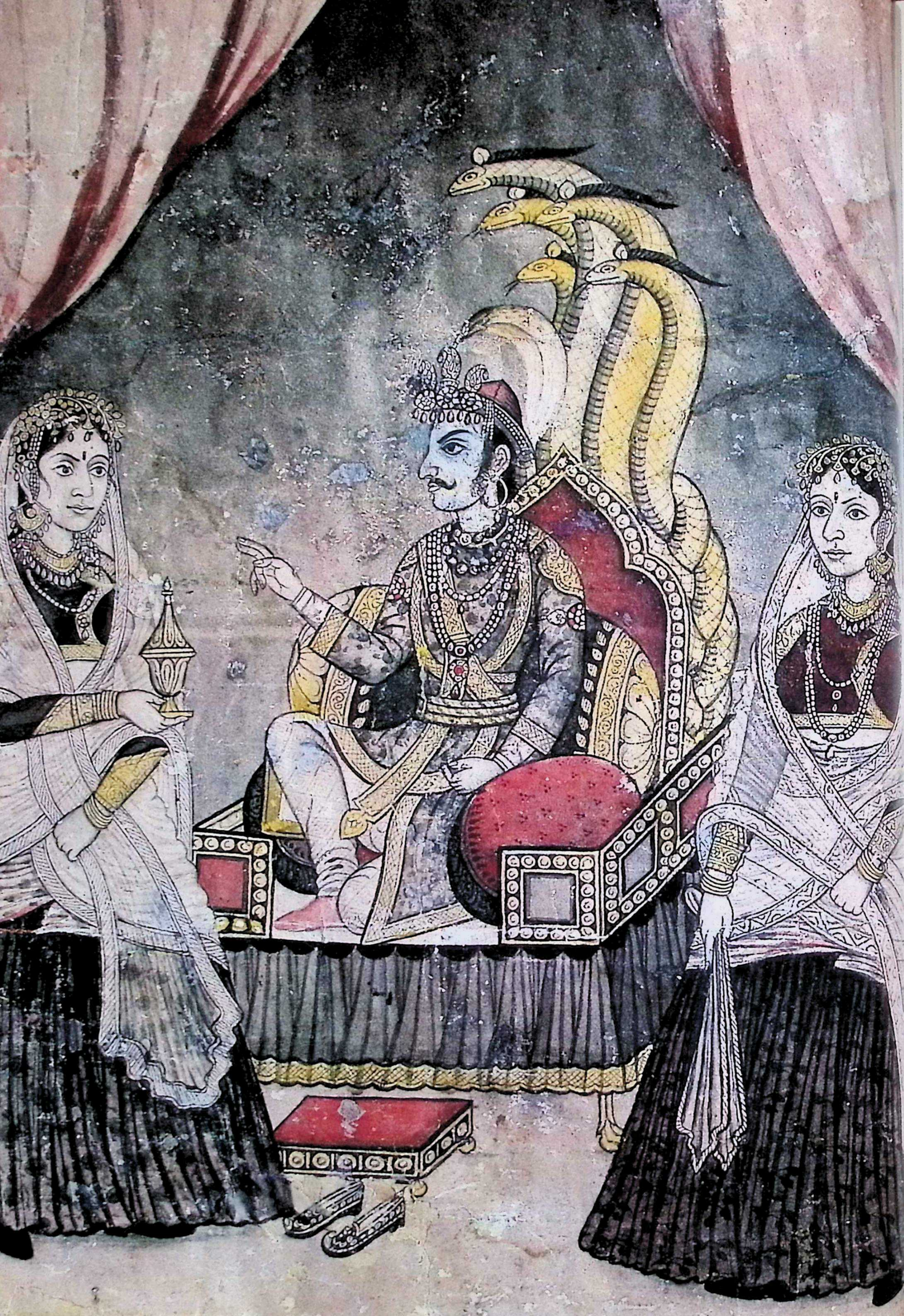


Right : A fine mural of Bhairav at the Chandeshwori temple



The Gorkha Period





The Gorkha period began with the wanton destruction of art inevitable to conquest. For instance, Kirtipur's best architecture was almost completely destroyed, as a water-colour painting by Oldfield in 1855 shows. Sylvain Lévi complains that Patan, the finest achievement of Nepali creativity, has never recovered from the 'fanaticism and rapacity' of Gorkha conquest. Yet nations, like omelettes, cannot be built without breaking eggs. The many years it took Prithvi Narayan Shah to blockade and subdue the Valley, and the savage mauling that certain parts of the Valley received at his hands, can be seen as the price that an effete and divided city civilization paid to create the larger territorial unit of Nepal and to dominate it as its capital. It is only in the Gorkha period that the separate streams of evolution, that of the "Baise-Chaubise" (the twenty-two and twenty-four) principalities of the western hills, that of the somewhat obscure and depleted civilization of the Siñja empire of the Karnali basin, that of the Buddha and Kapilvastu, that of Janak and the Mithila tradition, that of the Lama monasteries of the north and of the Kiranti of the east, all lose their separate identities in the broad confluence of Gorkhali forces. The story of the last three quarters of the eighteenth century is one of continuous war. Since Prithvi Narayan Shah was the ruler of a tiny and poor principality, his resources for war were extremely limited. The most breathtaking aspect of his conquest is the enterprise with which he used this tiny capital-base to take over not only the opulent cities of the Valley, but also a large chunk of territory virtually stretching from the Gandaki to the Tiesta. We must visualise this achievement in the context of a time when primitive tracks over the arduous mountains and unbridged rivers must have made military transport, logistics and communication a bewildering problem. The grit, determination and bold risk-taking of this greatest of figures of Nepalese history is tremendous. The very limitations of his resources, which lend added resonance to his achievement, meant he had to rely on guile to surprise and divide his opponents, on terror to demoralise them, and when these failed, on the simple tactics of economic blockade and attrition to wear them down. The glittering prize of the Valley beckoned him. Prithvi Narayan Shah knew that the fountainhead of the prosperity was the trade with Tibet, and right from the start he attacked Nuwakot with the objective of controlling the lucrative Kyirong trade route. He also tried, as soon as possible, to gain control of the Kuti route. The main effect of this struggle for domination over northern commerce was the virtual collapse of Tibetan trade, at least temporarily. It was principally the unwillingness of the Tibetans to resurrect the relationship that they had with the Newar Rajas, particularly the rights Nepal enjoyed to mint coins for Tibet, that led to the war that Prithvi Narayan's successors fought with Tibet. This long break in Tibetan trade, combined with the deleterious effects of war, naturally sapped the prosperity of the Valley. Newar culture depended not only on the patronage of kings, but also on the patronage of a comparatively wide-based merchant and trading class. The period of conquest saw an inevitable decline in the field of arts.

Previous page: The Kathmandu skyline captured from a tower at the Hanuman Dhoka Palace

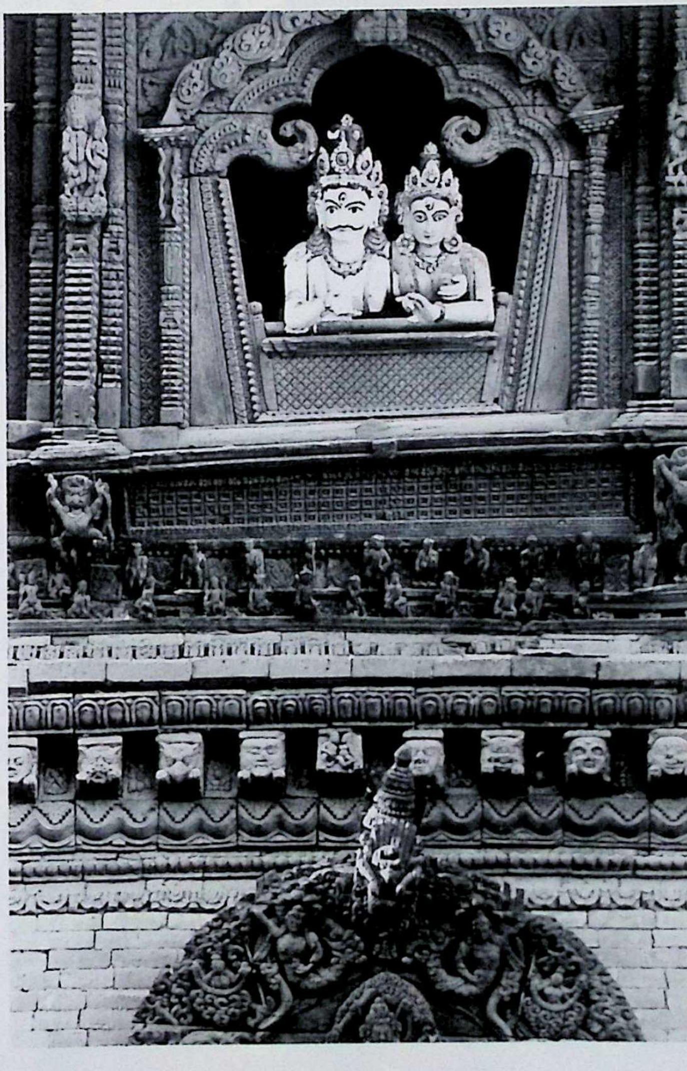
Opposite page : A miniature painting of Prithvi Narayan Shah on the Naga throne

After Prithvi Narayan Shah captured the Valley, he and his successors continued the process of territorial expansion till it reached Bhutan to the east and Killa Kangra to the west, and south towards Oudh. At the end of the period, there were over 40,000 troops. While the conquest of the Valley and some of the cultivated Terai lands must have yielded good dividends, the profits of victory in the majority of the hills and jungle-bound lands must have been marginal. As a result, the resources of the Valley were almost exclusively used to maintain this large military machine and the classes that manned that machine. This again meant that the flow of the residual finance to sustain aesthetic activities was thin. This does not mean that there were no palaces or temples built, or that people ceased to ornament their houses. The large parts of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, rebuilt by Prithvi Narayan, testify to this. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although the quantum of artistic expression declined, the momentum of Malla art carried over some aesthetic overflow.

Prithvi Narayan was no mere conqueror. He was astute in framing the policies needed to consolidate the state. He was extremely worried about the threat from the south, especially from the British. As a result, his policy was to arrest the process of penetration from the south, whether religious, economic or cultural. He initiated the closed state policy to protect Nepal from southern ambitions. He also saw the need to integrate the hill people with the Newars. So he consciously set out to patronise the Newar arts, to encourage their festivals and mores. His economic ideas as they appear in his written testament to his successors, which is virtually a manual on how to run the larger Nepal (the *Dibya Upadesh*), were similar to the ideas of mercantilists, and he saw cultural integrity as a means of protecting the hardy puritan values of the hill nobles (his officers) from the effete and debilitating impact of the late Muslim culture. So the temples and palaces built in the Shah period are a continuation of the Malla period. The great period of wood carving and brass ornamen-

Left : Shop stalls below temple housing goddess Bhagvati, said to have been brought from Nuwakot by Prithvi Narayan Shah tation, the fantastic profusion of private architecture declined and petered out. It was not that our Gorkha ancestors did not care for the arts; it was this visible sign of prosperity that had drawn them to the Valley. Whenever they found some time from the business of conquest, they emulated the aesthetic spirit of the Newars. The task of stretching the frontiers and establishing the Pax Gorkha gave them little leisure for such tasks. And as the prescriptions of the Dibya Upadesh show, Prithvi Narayan Shah was carefully tightfisted in rewarding his nobility to prevent them from sinking through affluence into decadence. So, a long period of diminishing patronage inevitably meant that fewer people from the new generation continued to apprentice themselves to the arts. And, in time, the skills themselves were eroded; the 'elan vital' went out of the aesthetic impulse. From this point it was mainly a process of maintaining the skills and passing them on. The era of great art was over.

The long period of wars came to an end in 1816, when the clash between the rugged expansionism of the Gorkhas and the organised and technically superior imperial military might of the British ended by confining Nepal more or less to its present frontiers. In this manner, the great adventure of the Gorkha conquest reached its conclusion. After the death of Prithvi Narayan, the achievements of political integration had no longer been the achievements of the kings. A series of minority successions and *roi fainéants* meant that the task was carried on by such able stewards as Bahadur Shah (a younger son of Prithvi Narayan Shah), Bhimsen Thapa, and by extraordinarily able generals in the field such as Amar Singh Thapa. So powerful was the halo of sanctity that Prithvi Narayan had handed down as a legacy to his descendants, that no steward dared to disturb the legal succession to the *de jure* reign of the Shah dynasty. Unlike the Amsuvarmans of an earlier age, whether Pandes, Thapas, Chautarias or Ranas ran the country, they ran it in the name of the Shahs whose royal family title became the sym-

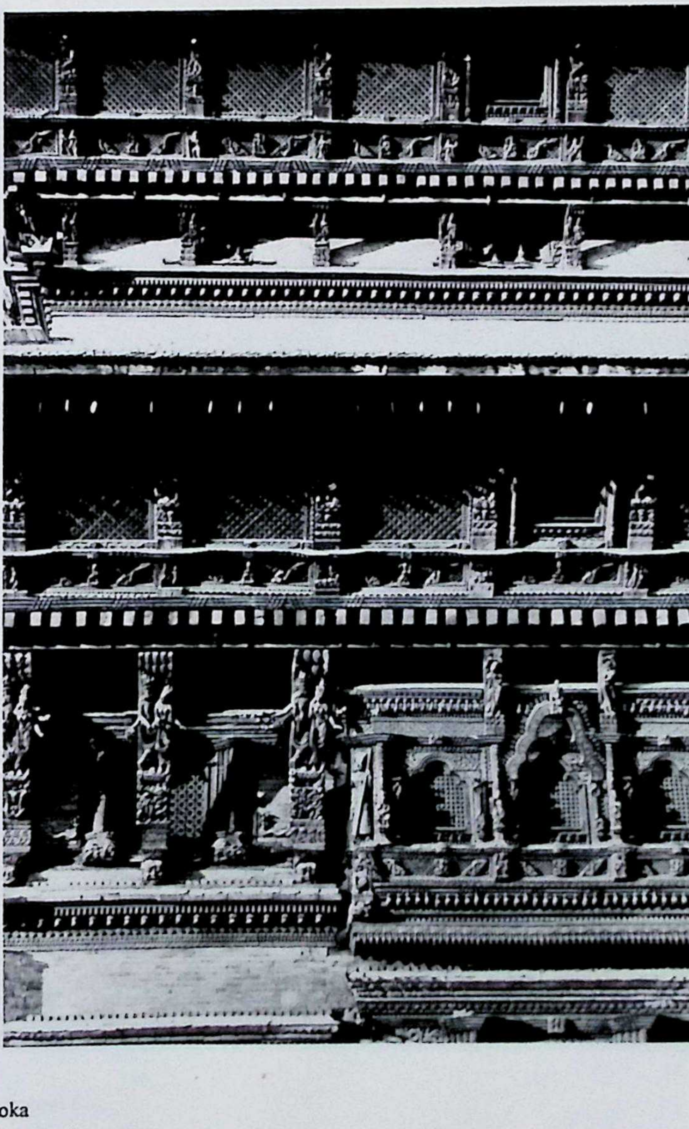


Right : An unusual depiction of Shiva and Parvati looking out of a finely carved window at Maru Tole

bol of national unity.

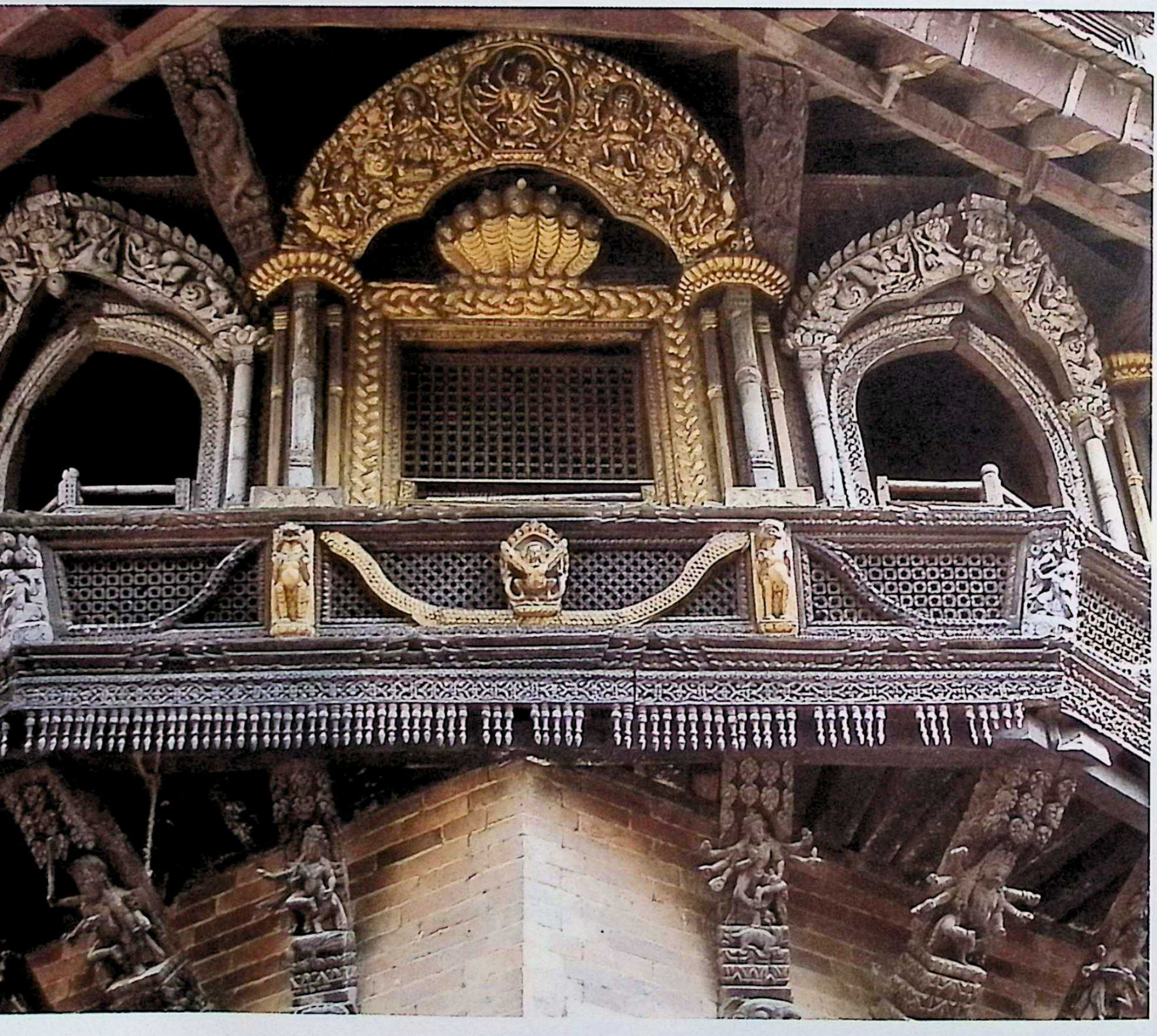
In the post-1816 period, the stewardship of Bhimsen Thapa gave Nepal two decades of peace and stability. It was a simmering peace. For Nepal maintained in this period, a large standing army whose enforced idleness had to be subsidized — an army of hardy and courageous officers and soldiers chafing at the bit of peace. These factors had some influence in abating the revival of art that should have been otherwise inevitable. Still the paintings of the period, especially in the style of Indian miniatures which in Nepal are for some reason rather larger than their prototypes, display a certain resilience. The period also initiates a change in architectural style away from brick and wood carving to stucco. The first instances of this change are probably Bhimsen's Tower (Dharara), an imitation of Muslim minarets and Bagh Durbar, the home of the Mukthiar,[1] Bhim Sen Thapa. In Nepalese mural paintings and illuminated manuscripts, the tradition seems to have continued in a diminished manner. One marked trend in painting is to portray prominent individuals of the period rather than depicting religious mythology.

The fall of Bhimsen Thapa (1837) ushered in a decade of savage struggle in the court of Kathmandu. The tale of betrayals, conspiracies, vengeance and slaughter that then unfolded is richer in its fare of gore and drama than any Restoration tragedy. The major clans of the Gorkha nobility rose and fell from power with mind-boggling rapidity, and the members of these clans changed sides and allegiance with such celerity that it is virtually impossible to disentangle the twists and turns of this dreadful tale. It was as if the energies and ambitions of the Gorkha nobility, which had found such apt expression in the process of conquest, checked within the borders of Nepal by the iron fist of Bhimsen for over two decades, now turned inwards and exploded in his absence into a frenzy of self-destruction. Pande, Brahmin, Chautaria, Thapa, each of the major Gorkha clans briefly rose to power only to be pulled down in bloody violence by the others. The history of the decade is that of a



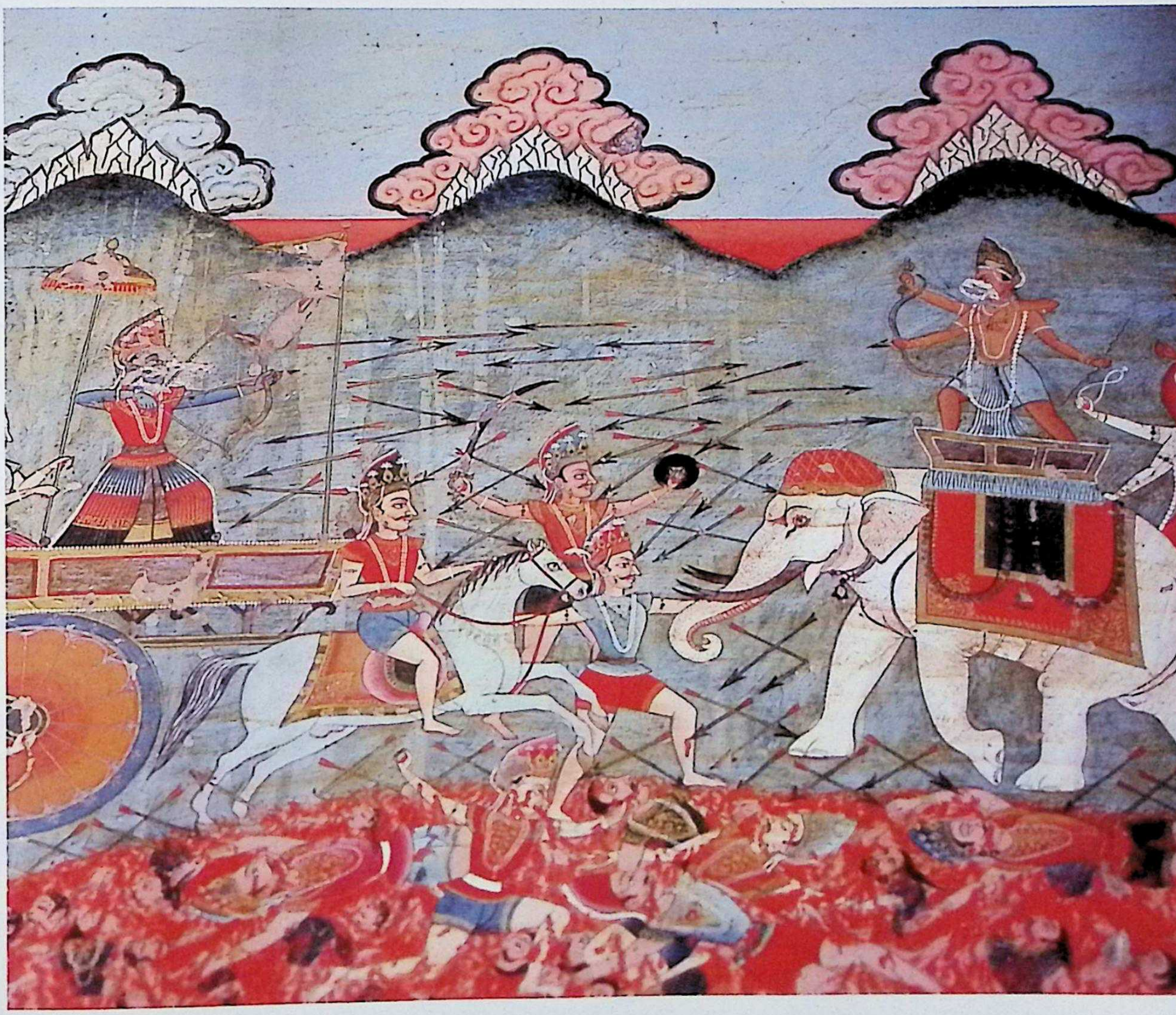
Opposite page : The Phulpati procession entering Hanuman Dhoka

Right: An exquisite mass of wood carvings at the Hanuman Dhoka complex deadly game of musical chairs in which King Rajendra Bikram's two queens pull away the fatal chairs while he, the king, looks on in weak bewilderment at this terrible spectacle. Failure in this game is fatal, not only for the player, but for all his family. The diplomacy and statesmanship which had been the mainstay of Nepal's sovereign survival, suddenly seems to have exhausted itself. Had this rudderless course continued beyond a decade, who can predict what would have happened to the Nepalese state? The British, during the astute residencies of Hodgson and Lawrence, had begun to exploit Nepal's vulnerability and had started to take advantage of the division in the Nepalese court. Equally dangerous in such a period of instability, was the temptation for the man in power to turn the energies of the military towards external adventure, and thus gain a shortlived reinforcement in personal power while staking

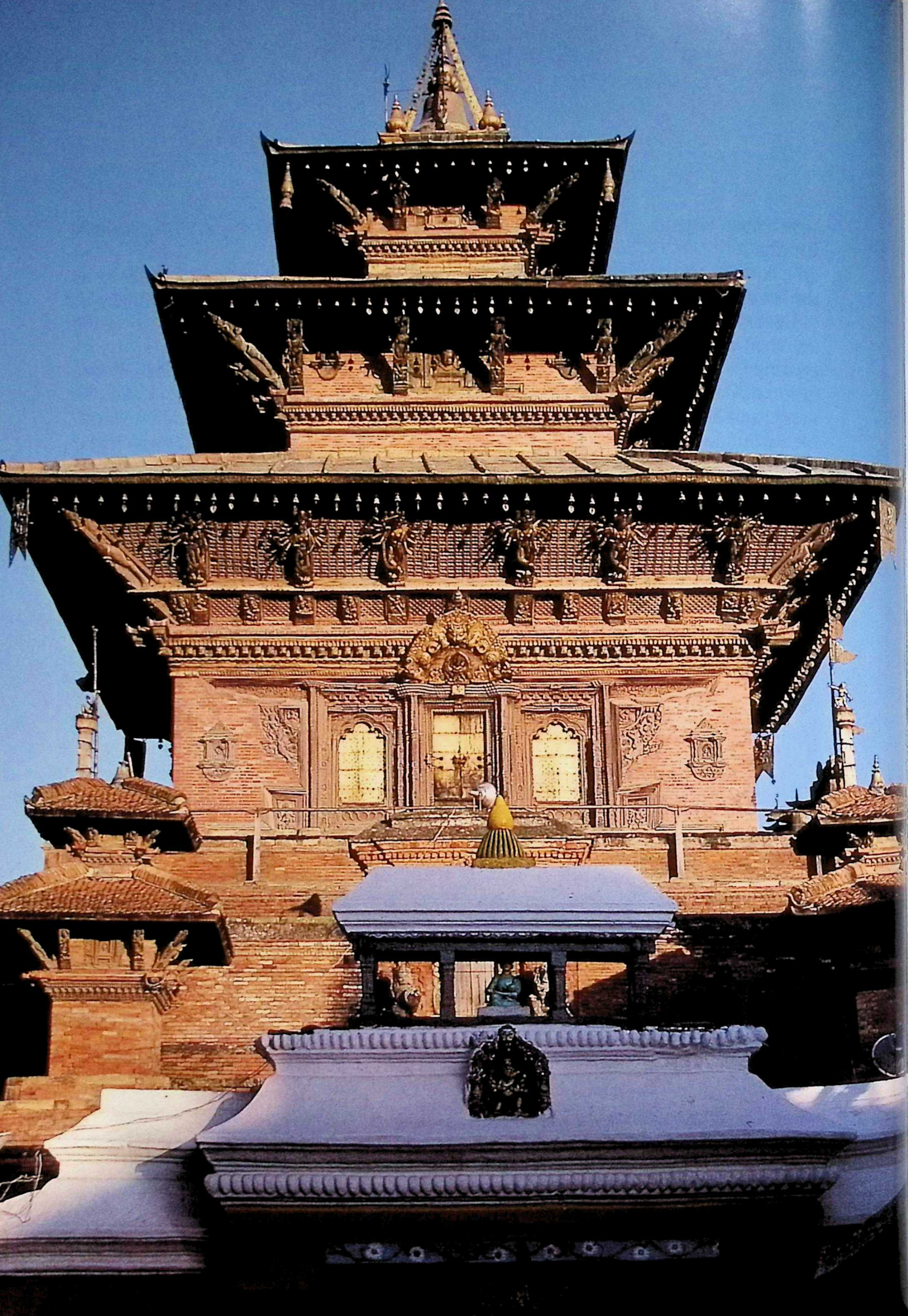


A rare carved balcony in ivory and bone at the Hanuman Dhoka complex sovereignty against what had by then become the invincible might of the British Empire.

Amidst this welter of intrigue, there rises the profile of Jung Bahadur, sharp as the blade of the Khukuri and as naked of pity. He rose to power in an atmosphere of violence where each man secured his hold on the highest authority by slaughtering the rival clan: Bhimsen Thapa had celebrated his accession to supreme authority by putting Damodar Pande and his sons to death. After Bhimsen's fall, Rana Jung Pande (a son of Damodar who had managed to elude the Thapa wrath) returned the compliment, and added to it by driving Bhimsen to a carefully contrived suicide in prison. Not content with that, he forbade the performance of funeral rites, dismembered Bhimsen's corpse and exposed it so that only dogs and vultures dared to venture



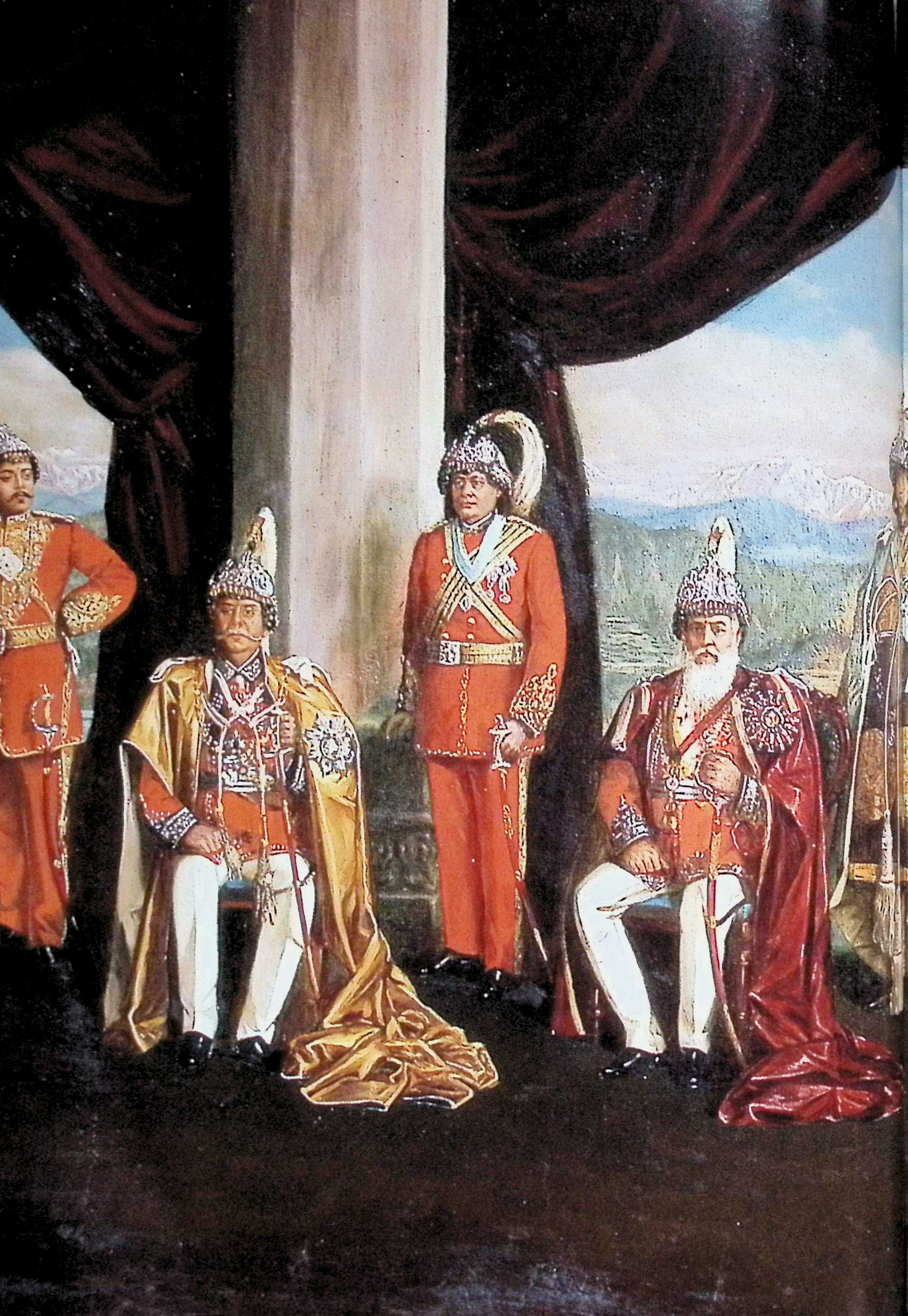
The mural of the war between the gods and demons, Hanuman Dhoka

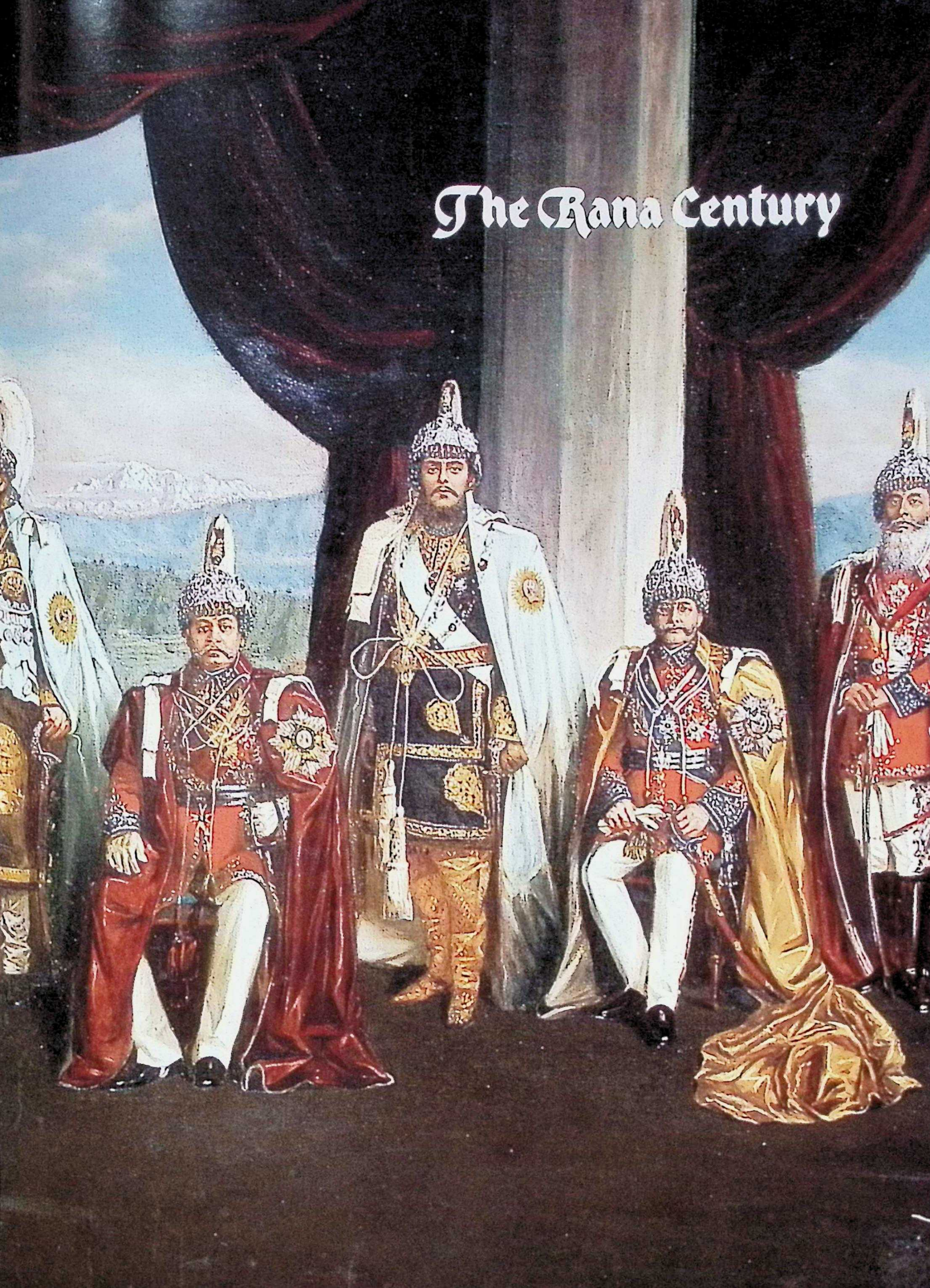


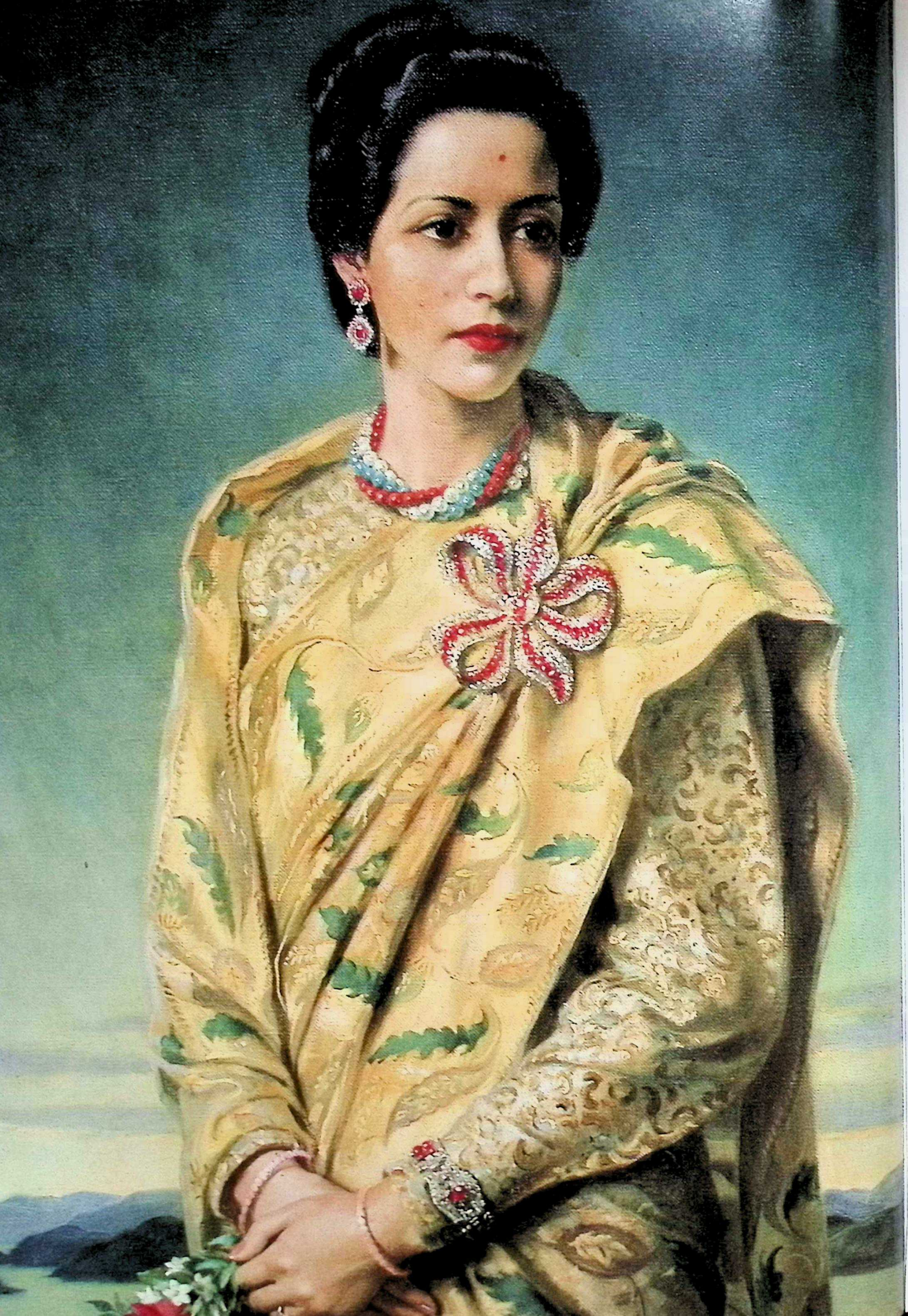
near it. Mathabar Singh Thapa, in turn, marked the receipt of the seals of office by killing off every Pande he could find. A census of the Gorkha nobility in this decade would have shown a mortality rate more rapid than in the years of the plague. Jung Bahadur was a man who matched his times. As violent as the epoch but more ruthless in his determination, astute in intrigue yet quick in decision, he grasped every opportunity as it arose in that deadly game of musical chairs. He was destined to command and control the turbulence amidst which he was born. His rise to power is marked by one distinctive feature: whereas his predecessors shed blood in vengeance against a particular clan, Jung Bahadur did not make any such nice distinctions. In the Kot massacre, which catapulted him to power, and in the Bhandarkhal incident, he eliminated almost all the Thurghure (the Gorkha nobility — Basnets, Pandes, Chautarias, and even his own relatives, the Thapas) with an impartial ruthlessness, unmitigated by any qualms of favour, friendship or nepotism. This was not too difficult a task: over seventy-five per cent of the members of the major clans had already been killed in the rise and fall of mukthiars during the last ten years; he only had to get rid of the remnants. The slate of history was washed clean of rival blue blood, leaving the Ranas in solitary aristocratic splendour to rule for the next century.

Opposite page : The Taleju Bhawani temple, Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu

Above : A forceful equestrian bronze of Jung Bahadur Rana




The Rana Century



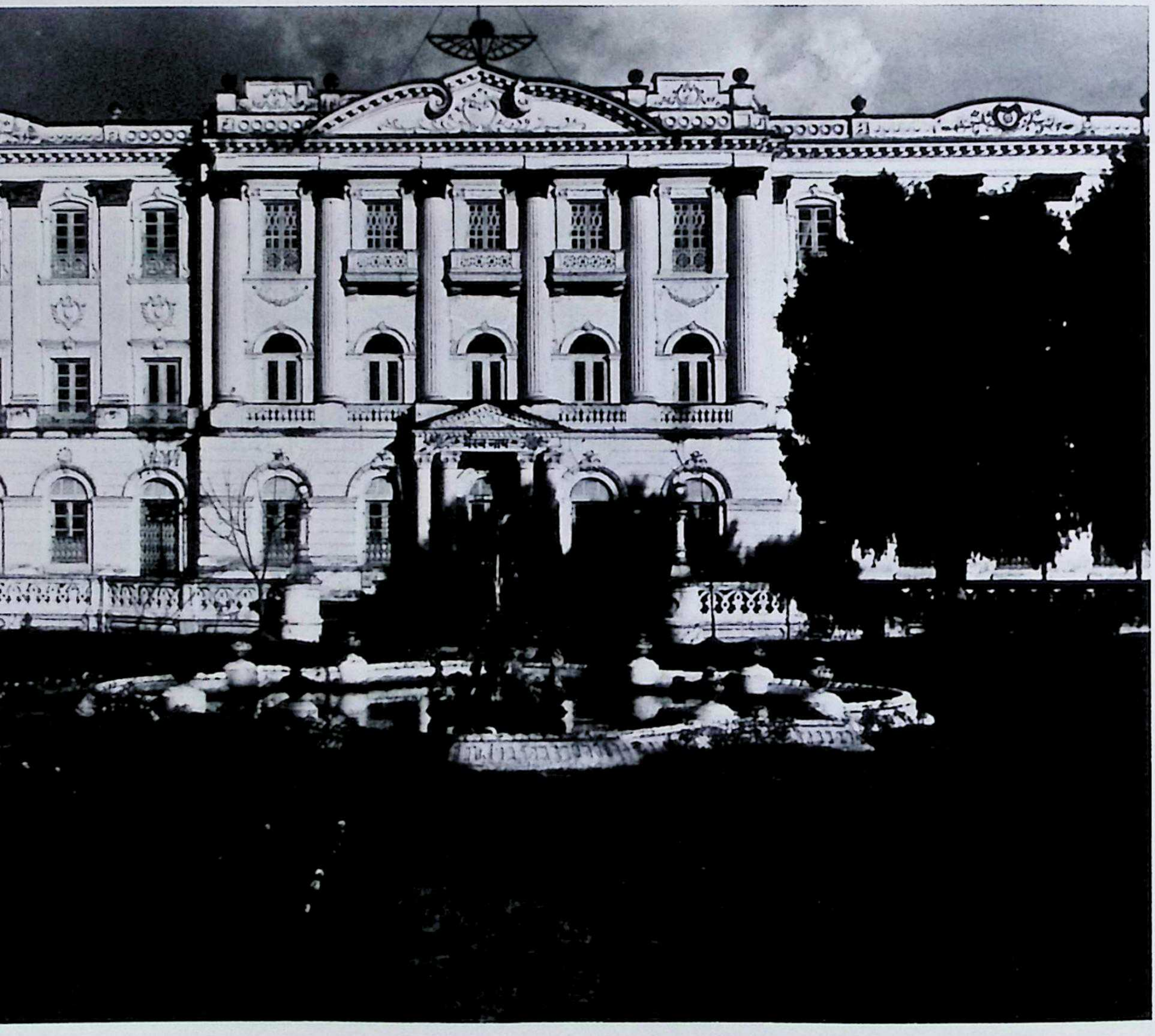
The date of Jung Bahadur's coup, 1846, marks a definite turn in history. Before this, the 'Mukthiars' of Nepal had ruled by the force of their wit and personality. Jung Bahadur institutionalised the *de facto* rule of the hereditary Rana Prime Minister by taking a Pañjapatra (a document legitimised by the royal seal of authority) from the king which made him Maharaja and autocrat of Nepal. As his success in 1846 was in considerable measure due to the unswerving loyalty of his brothers, he devised a peculiar system of agnate succession by which the Maharajaship devolved upon the eldest member of the Rana family. The ensuing century of Rana rule was one of utter stability. Although two of Jung Bahadur's successors were ousted by intra-familial coups, one bloody and one bloodless, these coups did not affect the even tenor of Nepalese society. The two wars that Jung Bahadur fought were both short and lucrative. His aid to the British during the Mutiny gained Nepal the restitution of the whole of the western Terai and embellished both the crown of the king and that of the Ranas with splendid jewels. From the Tibetan war, apart from a small annual tribute that imposed a subsidiary status on Tibet, he gained free trading rights over all Tibet for Nepalese merchants, and extraterritoriality for Nepalese residents in Tibet. Thus, the prosperous trade with the north was re-established.

The calm that settled over Nepal after Jung Bahadur took the state into his firm grip, ensued after a long period of wars and turmoil climaxing, in the last decade, into a degree of internal disorder which nearly broke down the foundations of the state. The finer arts could not survive in a period of such profound military preoccupation and internal conflict. Equally, the commercial decline deprived the traditional arts of much of the patronage on which they depended. Except for a short reprieve during Bhimsen Thapa's time, this depletion in the traditional arts and skills continued for over a century. The re-establishment of stability could not possibly trigger off an instant resurgence of traditional culture. Some Nepalese writers have typified the culture of the ruling elite after the Gorkha conquest as an essentially military culture.[1] It was military skills — the martial arts, imported weaponry, techniques, uniforms, and the factories of war — which soaked up both the wealth and the attention of Nepal for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The hypnosis of war lingered on as a hangover all through the Rana period, even after a long break had in a sense removed its *raison d'etre*. On most ceremonial occasions, the Rana men, and often even boys, wore uniforms. Military titles became hereditary. In the Rana family's hierarchy, there were no titles like duke, earl, lord or knight. Similarly, they relegated the old title of Kazi, Sardar etc, to non-Rana subordinates in the official hierarchy. A Rana rose from lieutenant-colonel through various military gradations to general, commanding-general and commander-in-chief before succeeding to the Maharajaship. So concerned were they with these military titles that they lost sight of the fact that the word Rana was conferred as a title by the king to the family of Balnarshingh Kunwar as a reward for the services of Jung Bahadur, restoring to the family the lineal status derived from its ancestry as a cadet branch of the Maharanas of Udaipur. Thus the

Previous page: An anachronistic painting by Balakrishna Sama, of all the nine Rana Maharajas, (1846-1951), depicting from Left : Dev Shumshere, Padma Shumshere, Ranuddip, Bhim Shumshere, Jung Bahadur, Judha Shumshere, Bir Shumshere, Mohan Shumshere (author's grandfather), Chandra Shumshere (author's great grandfather)

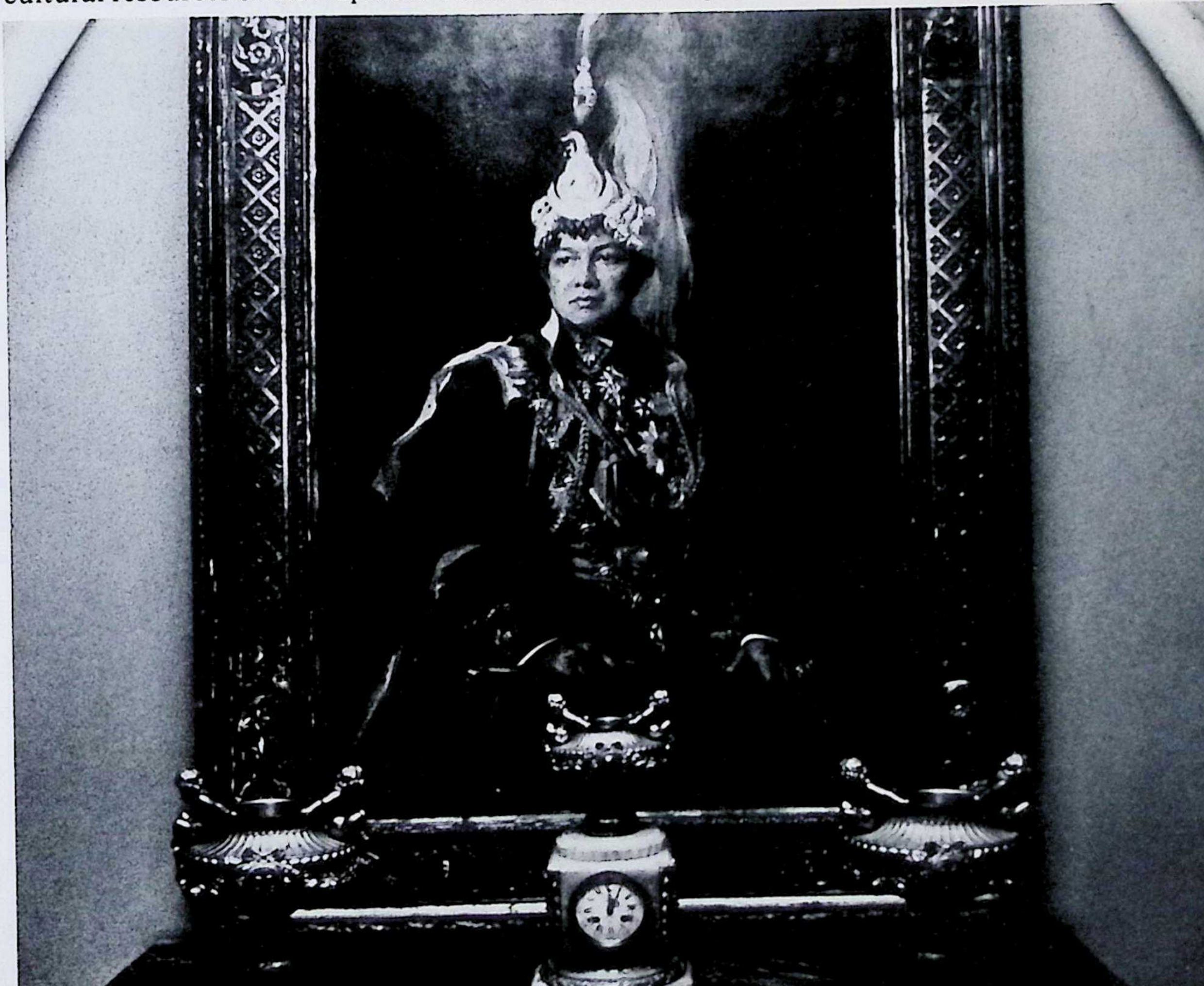
Opposite page: Portrait of H.H. Rani Kesar Shumshere by Margaret Lindsay Williams title of Rana is today used as a surname. They were deeply concerned with the paraphernalia of military life — parades, uniforms, weapons and medals. Civilian responsibilities over major departments of government were held by hereditary generals and regarded by some as less important than their military rank. This pronounced militarism may have made the Gorkha aristocracy insensitive to the fine tradition of national art that they inherited from the Newar rajas.

The Rana period also coincided with the zenith of the empire 'on which the sun never set'. Jung Bahadur was the first subcontinental ruler to visit England. In the past, the Chinese and Indian influences had renewed the springs of Nepalese art and architecture; in this period, it was the culture of the dominant West that spread to India, China, and even to isolated Nepal. There is a story which has come down from

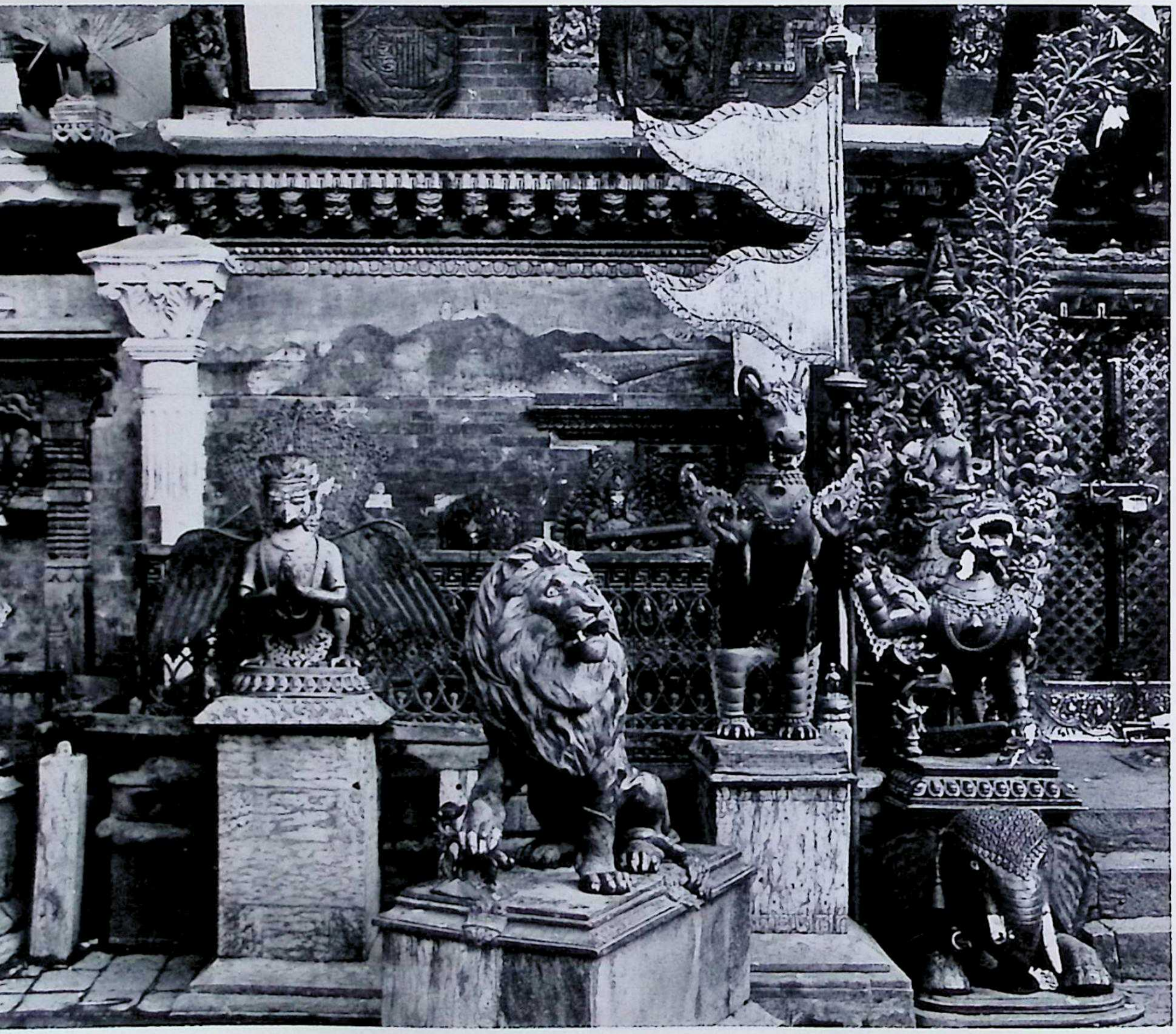


Laxminivas Palace, where the author was born, presently housing the Paratroop battalion our family annals of Jung Bahadur's reaction to Western culture. During his visit to England, he went to the opera and was so entranced by the arias of the diva that he clapped enthusiastically. When he was later asked by Queen Victoria how he could appreciate an opera in a language he did not understand, Jung Bahadur replied that he did not need to understand the nightingale to be enchanted by her song.[2] This anecdote is apt. The siren sounds of Western culture proved irresistibly seductive to the Ranas; the reviving Nepalese art succumbed easily to Western mores.

Around the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a whole network of railways began to be built in India along the southern border of Nepal. This changed the economy of Nepal, making possible the commercial exploitation of the forest and agricultural resources of the Nepalese Terai on a hitherto unprecedented scale. It was this

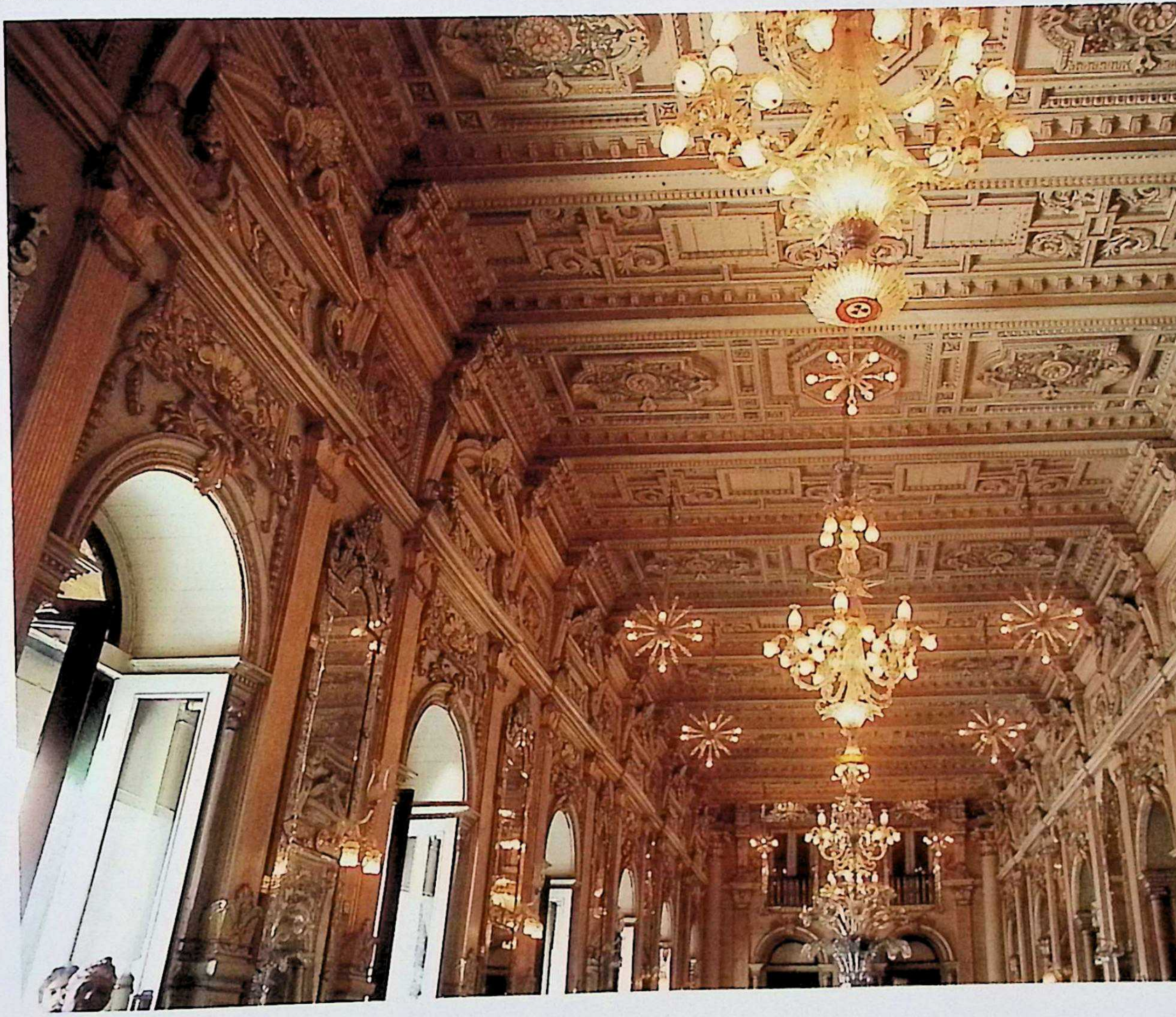


Portrait of Field Marshal H.H. Kesar Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana by De Lazlo new source of wealth that made possible the characteristic cultural expression of the period, the Rana palaces. The sources of wealth were far greater than in the past, and these palaces are far larger and more luxurious than the palaces of the Newars or of the early Gorkha period. Just as the Nepalese exports of forest products and foodgrains became a part of the world market through the railways, so did the palaces become heavily influenced by world art. Although stucco architecture began in the early nineteenth century, it is only at the turn of the nineteenth century that this particular architectural form became the dominant theme and its graceful columns and fine facades began to flower all over Patan and Kathmandu. The man who established this neoclassical style in Nepal was Maharaja Chandra Shumshere, who, in his 29-year reign, built numerous palaces.



Uku Bahal bronzes, Rana period

The most famous of them was the official residence of the Rana Maharaja, Singha Durbar (later the Central Secretariat). Almost the whole palace was burnt in a fire in the early seventies and now only the original facade remains. Singha Durbar was, in its day, a vast structure with numerous inter-connected courtyards. The magnificent facade of well-proportioned archways, between which rise double Corinthian colonnades, gives a tremendous sense of space and splendour. Its compound was equally spacious, containing numerous gardens, a deer park, a polo ground and playing-fields. Of the open lawns and lovely gardens, the only remnants today are the ornate fountains and the small garden around which the front drive curves. Something of the grandeur of the original, now eclipsed by a crowd of buildings with their discordant and careless forms, can still be gleaned from the cut-glass globes that light



The Versailles-inspired ceiling of the Vilayati Baithak in Singha Durbar

Overleaf: The neo-classical facade of the impressive Singha Durbar at twilight

up the drive. As one studies the imposing colonnades and the splendour of the arcades opening into the dazzling balcony, one gets the sense that the building is glowering across the great parade ground at the old city of Kathmandu. It is as if this visible expression of Rana power at its high-noon was striving to dominate the old Newar culture with a stronger and newer form of architecture. The Rana palaces can be seen as a symbol of a different power system which no doubt saw itself as a more modern polity. As a result, the architecture emulated the source of that modernisation, the West. In this sense, there was a deliberate break with the past. Just as Singha Durbar pointed out to all comers that here was the centre and focus of the ruling power over all Nepal, so, in a broader sense, the Rana palaces, if you look beyond the occidental trappings, were essentially an assertion of the wealth and might of the Ranas.

Jung-Hirenya-Hem Narayan Mandir at Kalmochan

The Rana palaces have often been reviled by savants as alien and discordant encrustations which have disrupted the harmony of the continuous evolution of native culture. There is, no doubt, a certain weight behind this argument. Yet, viewed in the flow of history, the emergence of this architectural form is no stranger than the ebb and flow of many styles and forms of art from the subcontinent and China which typify the cultural heritage of Nepal. After all, it was the genius of Nepal to absorb, digest and transmute the cross-continental flow of influence. Perhaps the more pertinent question is: Does this art form disturb the harmony of style in the Valley? Yet, even this question is no longer so valid since the concrete box has become a far greater threat to the architectural consistency of the Valley than the stucco palace.

There is no doubt that the palaces of the Rana period are, in terms of their scale and concept, quite distinct from the medieval architecture of Nepal. Yet, if they are seen in their original context as massive and graceful statements that stand out against the landscaped pools of greenery that formed their large compounds, they seem to have achieved their own particular balance with the environment. In these Rana palaces there is an absence of that unhappy blend between European and oriental styles which lends an awkward air of exoticism to many of the palaces of the Indian maharajas. Perhaps due to the fact that the architects were Nepalis trained abroad, they were able to insert Nepalese features in the structure of the building without disturbing the fundamental balance of its style. In the profusion of courtyards, starting from those enclosed by the wings containing state-rooms right down to the servant quarters and the private gardens for the ladies, for instance, the allocation of space and function is reminiscent of earlier Nepalese architecture. It obeys social formulae essential to the Nepalese household. The very numbers of the palaces in one Valley, all so similar to each other, meant that the mass provides a consistency of its own. Similarly, the colours, now unfortunately faded and altered, lent the palaces that air of fantasy, that air of the exotic, that is more reminiscent of Moscow or of Petersburg than of Italy, France or England. Indeed, one is encouraged to say that the lines of these great buildings are specifically Rana neo-classical. They are not, in spite of the intentions of their architects, a pure imitation of the European neo-classical style.

Whether they conform to one's particular taste or not, the Rana palaces are a part of our cultural heritage. They are interesting to both the tourist and the student of architecture. They are, in their own way, unusual feats of architecture which required the use of the most unusual building materials. It is said, that since a plaster of adequate strength could not be made in Kathmandu, a curious mixture of molasses, horse-hair and lime mortar was used for plaster. These palaces were remarkable engineering and architectural feats in that they were executed almost entirely by Nepali engineers and architects with precious little training or exposure outside. As the tourist use of the palaces of the Indian maharajas indicates, there is considerable potential in the preservation of these Rana palaces which, till now, have been neglected.

The change to the neo-classical style of architecture was accompanied by a change in the style of decoration and furnishings. In paintings, large life-size portraits in the European style were painted by such artists of renown as Samar Shumshere and

Balakrishna Sama. They also produced some fine Nepalese landscapes. The staterooms of the palaces were decorated with such paintings and others imported from the West, with Gobelin tapestries and Persian carpets. They had furniture by Maples of London; they contained vases from China, screens from Japan, Venetian mirrors, sundry Victoriana and even cut-glass fountains. The floors were marble, the ceilings splendid. There were also plenty of examples of Nepalese wood, metal and ivory carving to be found in the showcases and prayer rooms of these palaces. Another typically Rana contribution to Nepalese culture was the shikar mural, generally showing tiger hunts in the Terai organised with a magnificent retinue of elephants. The equestrian statues in bronze in the Tundikhel are another expression of that period's art form. The force and vivid movement of Jung Bahadur's statue is perhaps the most apt symbol of Gorkha military culture.

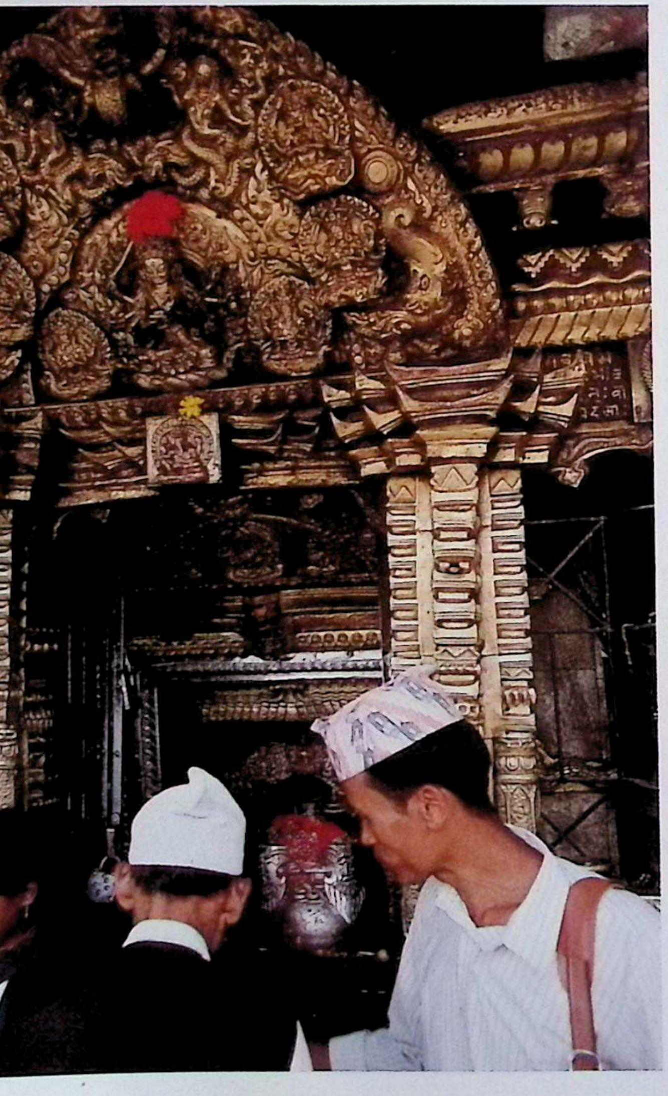
Another contribution of the Rana period to the cultural heritage of Nepal was the establishment of two of the finest libraries. The collection of old manuscripts (going back to the earliest times) in the Bir library provides some of the best resource material for Sanskrit scholarship. Some of these manuscripts contain very fine miniature paintings which ornamented the covers or embellished the writing. They are not only works of scholarship, but also works of art. The library, created by Field Marshal Kaiser Shumshere, contains one of the most catholic collections of books from both oriental or native sources and Western writings. Field Marshal Kaiser was a scholar, hunter and connoisseur of both art and wine. He is reputed to have had the finest cellar in the east. Although the cellar is almost dry now, the beautifully equipped library, with fine trophies and art-works framing a magnificent collection of books, was gifted by him to the nation, along with his palace which now houses the Ministry of Education.

These palaces were the offshoots of a peculiar aristocracy. The Ranas, in all the 104 years of their rule, remained a capital-based aristocracy. Unlike the Euro-

Opposite page: The Bagalamukhi shrine, at Kumbheshwar, renovated during the Rana period

Right: French-style bronze at Seto Macchendra Nath temple pean aristocracy, they did not live on their country estates. It was this divorce of the aristocracy from the rural areas that created the profusion of palaces in Kathmandu. In a sense, it was this self-imposed Vérsailles-complex of the Ranas that added this new aspect to Nepal's heritage. To a certain degree, the old art was amalgamated into a few of the palaces. Unfortunately, the finely-carved windows of Lal Durbar and Fora Durbar which were perhaps the best expressions of this, are now sold and scattered and both palaces dismantled. The rather curious baroque building (where the National Legislature now meets), with its gilded columns, its shikar murals and the carved balconies, or the stucco addition to Hanuman Dhoka, still shows evidence of this coming together of the east and west. On the whole, however, Rana palaces made no attempt to continue or amalgamate the traditional architecture; it was a deliberate leap into a new art form. The facade of 'Laxminivas' with its simple and graceful lines, its restraint and elegance, epitomises this form.

Strangely enough, this break in style did not affect temple architecture. At Kalmochan (a ghat temple built for funeral and mourning purposes during the Rana period), for instance, there is more influence of Lucknow than of London. Religious art and architecture maintained its continuity with the past. This fact is most evident in temples rebuilt after the great earthquake of 1936. Without any obvious attempt at conscious restoration of past architectural styles, most of the temples that were built maintained a harmony with traditional themes on the whole.[3] This implies that the old skills were still extant when the need arose. The inherited techniques of metal work and wood carving, although attenuated, continued. Above all, the art of Thanka (Tibetan scroll painting) continued unabated, not only in the Valley, but in the Gumbas (Buddhist monasteries) of northern Nepal. In temples all over Nepal, stone sculptures, wooden trellises and struts continued to be carved as did a variety of brass and metal work. Though in this latest phase the sculp-

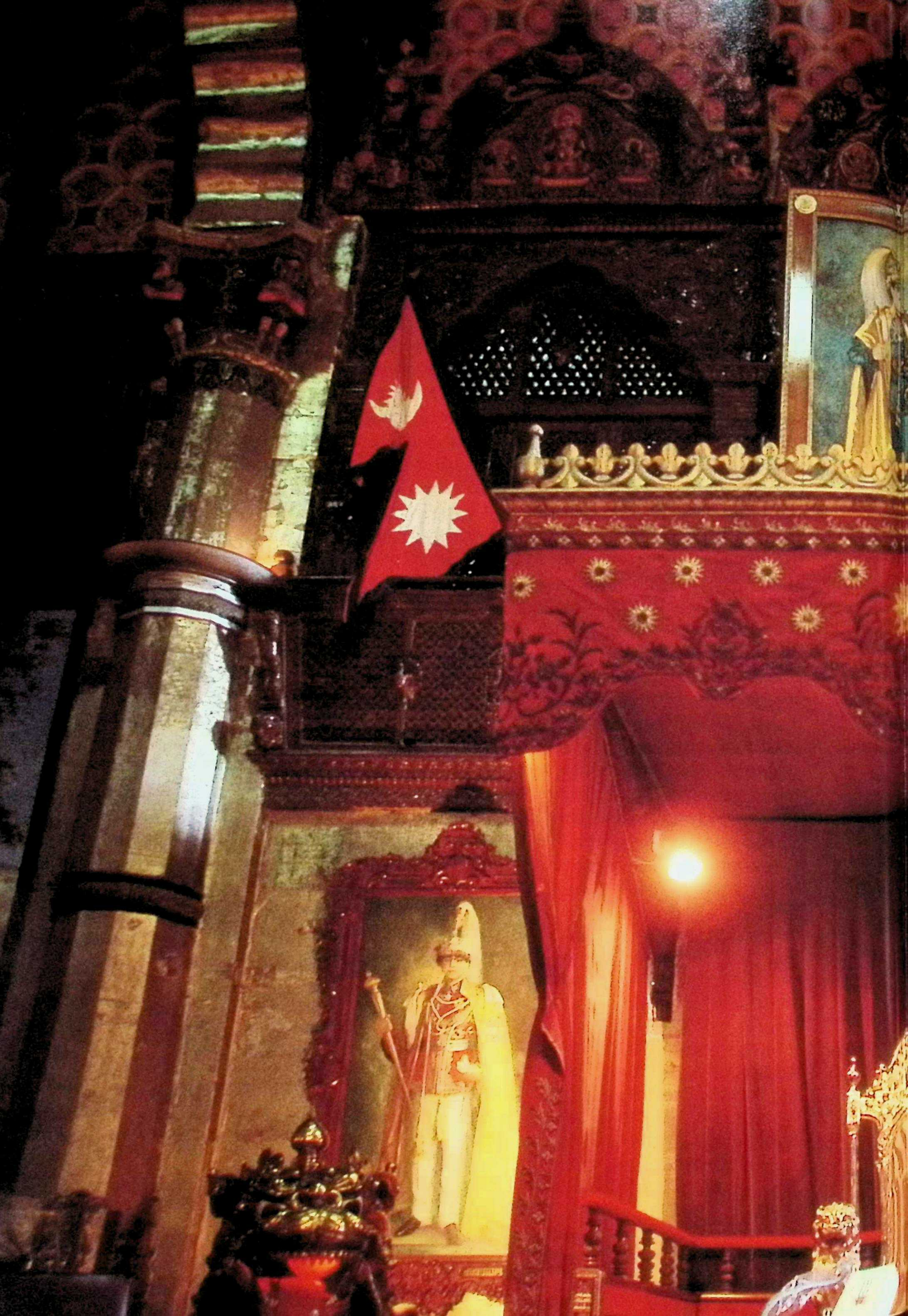


Left: Devotees at the Annapurna Shrine tures totally lack both the grace and movement of earlier epochs, religion passed on the ancient heritage in a thinning trickle of apprenticeship.

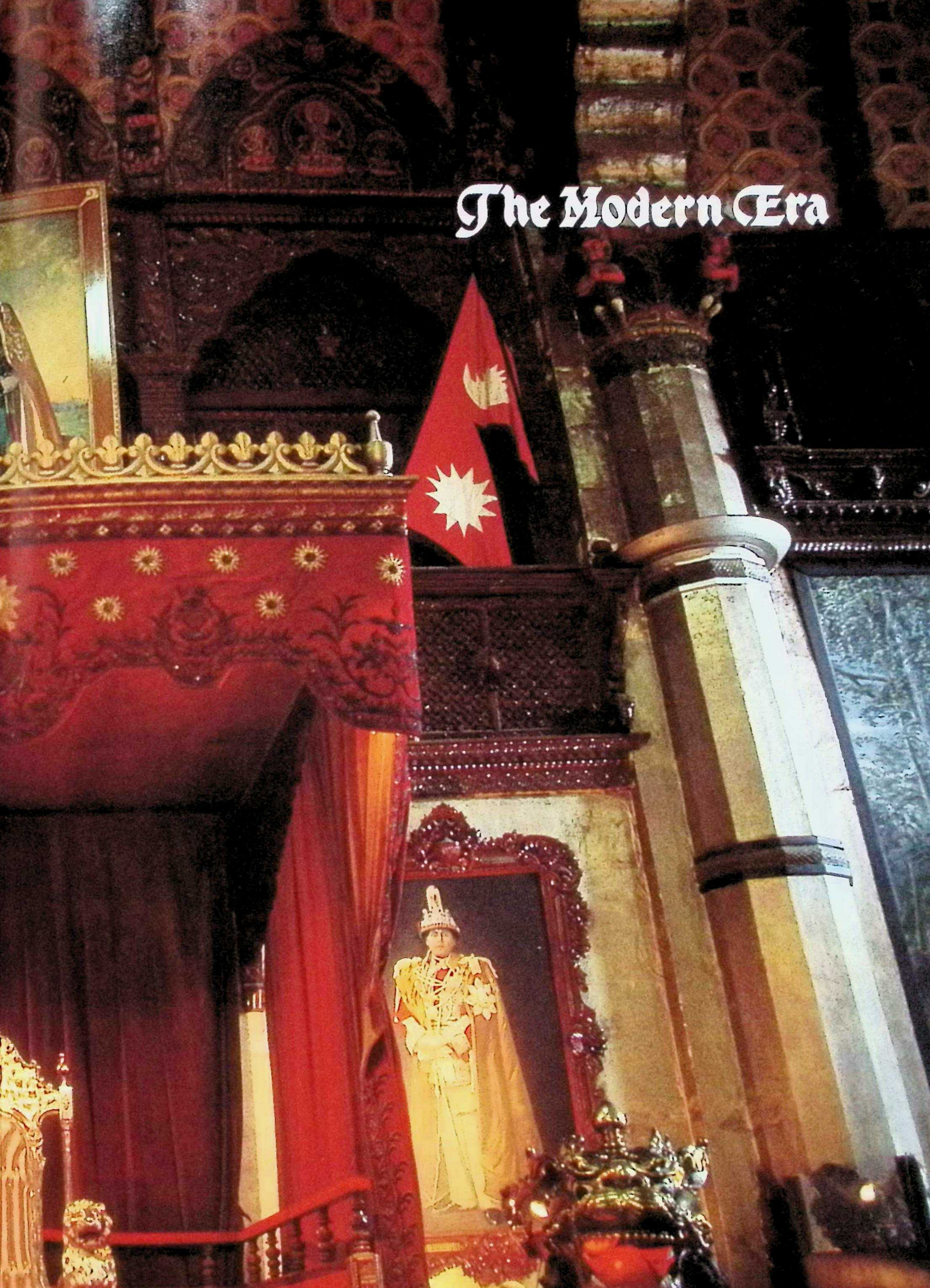
Another interesting architectural fact that continued for nearly three-quarters of the Rana period, and is representative of Gorkha military culture, is evident in the forts. Along the passes approaching the Valley, a system of forts (Garhis) existed probably from pre-Gorkha times. Many of these are dilapidated, but the Garhis along the old pony-trail to Kathmandu, such as the one at the pass between the two Kulekhani electric projects, still show the strength and engineering skill of these old fortresses. The finest of these forts dominates the old Kuti trade route, now the motorable road to Tibet. From this fort, Duganagarhi (a two-hour walk uphill from the motor road), a fine promontory surveys the border-crossing point. From it, you can see the first Tibetan town across the border, Khasa, where you can still find a standing pillar reputedly gouged by a cannon shot from the fort during the last Tibetan war. The narrow cliffs that fall steeply towards the Bhote-Kosi river frame Khasa to a viewer from the fort like a target across the backsight of a gun. This fort built by Dhir Shumshere is another neglected monument.

In a fundamental sense, the superstructure of palatial architecture and the taste for imported luxury goods did not affect the Ranas' way of life or their strength of faith. Nepal, in spite of it all, remained isolated from the rest of the world. If this isolation cost Nepal the loss of development opportunities in the twentieth century by inhibiting educational, infrastructural and industrial development, it also protected religious culture. Within these palaces, with all their occidental accoutrements, the way of life was that of a high-caste Hindu. Just as the Nepalese adapted Western clothes by wearing a Western jacket tailored by Ranken (of Calcutta) on top of the traditional labeda-surwal[4], so were the palaces and imported knick-knacks and cars superimposed on the original Nepalese culture. The Rana Maharajas, right upto

A young devotee peering over devotees in bronze at Hiranyaverna Mahavihar



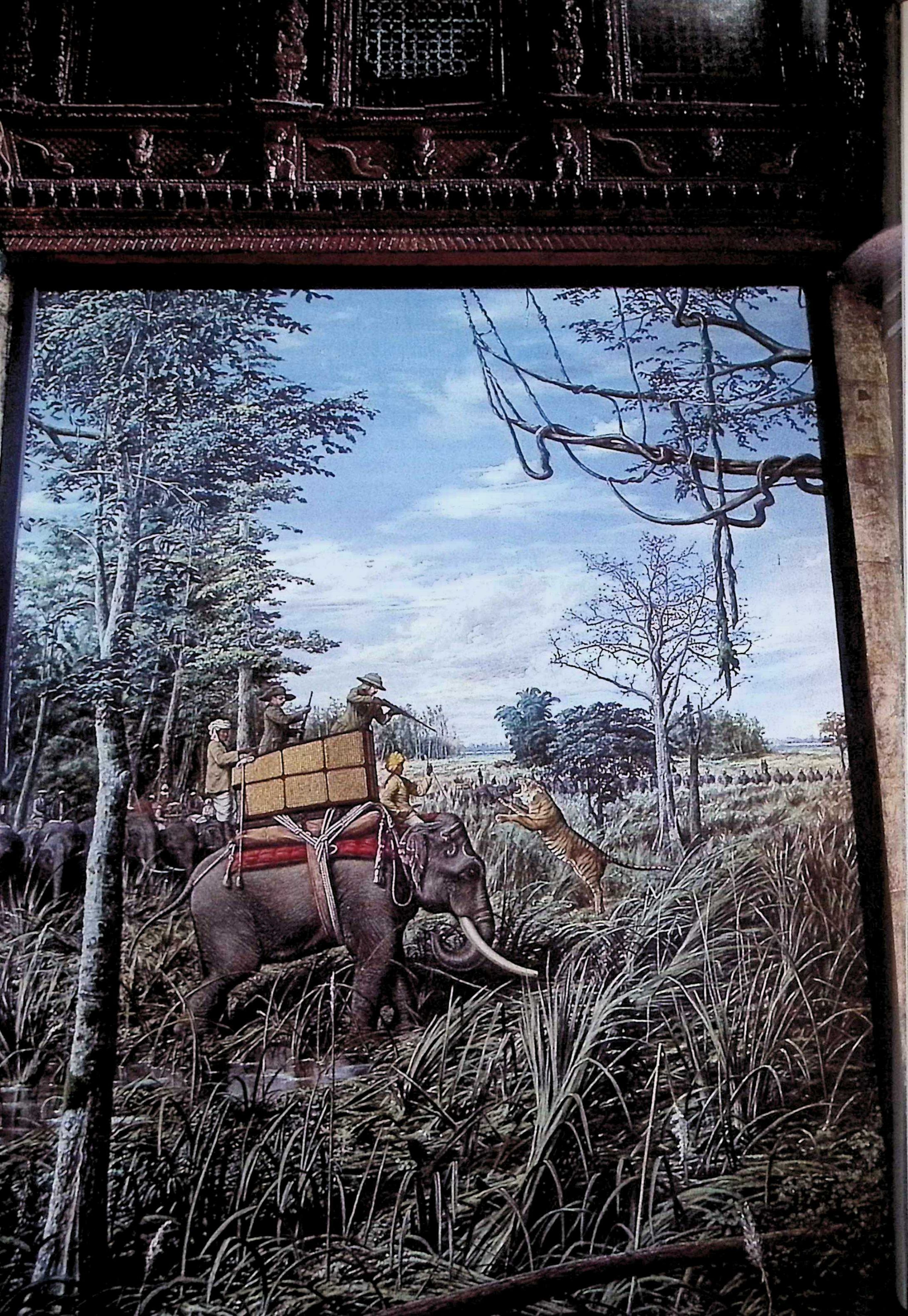
The Modern Era



The political importance of the change over in 1951, and its developmental consequences in the years to follow, have led most analysts to lay major emphasis on the political and economic aspects of this event. Yet the changes that ensued after the fall of the Rana regime were so widespread in their consequences, so vital in their ramifications, that it must be regarded as the major watershed in Nepalese history, with equally important socio-cultural implications. If 1951 marked the advent of a new political era and a change in the dimensions of development, it also marked the end of a two-millennia-old protection in the cultural system of Nepal. In the Licchavi and Malla periods, the natural barricades of the Himalayas and the Terai forests had acted as buffers against the shock waves of change and upheaval from the north and south. After the Gorkha conquest, a deliberate policy of isolation reinforced the natural buffers that had acted as selective sieves to the inflow of external socio-cultural influences. As a result, neither the impact of Islam nor that of British imperialism disturbed the integrity of the ancient civilization and culture that Nepal had evolved. In the fifties, these suffocating walls were torn down; the policy of the 'closed' state ended in 1951; foreigners were allowed free entry into Nepal. Nepal had a single college, about 20-30 high schools and a few hundred primary schools upto 1951. In the ensuing decade, educational institutions suddenly began to sprout with freedom and enthusiasm. Many Nepalis went abroad for education. The Tribhuvan Rajpath, a highway connecting the Valley to India, was built. The doors to Nepal and to the minds of Nepalis were flung wide open. It was a period of breathtaking liberation in the world of ideas. As one analyst puts it, "The aftermath of the revolution was indeed an exhilarating and creative period for this new elite gratefully released from the deadening oppression of Rana-imposed conformity and authoritarianism. Inevitably, this almost frantic search for innovation had a considerable impact on political and social attitudes ... From a society in which voluntary political associations had been most conspicuous by their absence, Nepal was suddenly transformed into a society in which virtually all forms and idioms of contemporary world politics received at least token expression."[1] This wave of new ideas in politics was paralleled by a literary renaissance; poets, novelists and essayists poured out their thoughts with unparalleled intensity. Both in quality and quantity, this outburst of nationalist literature provided the folklore of the revolution. Breaking away from the aristocratic tradition of the past, the nucleus of a small bourgeois intellectual elite emerged. It was both inevitable and natural that this new explosion of free expression, breaking away from the past, should look outside for its inspiration. In this sense, the new socio-cultural trend turned away from its native roots and sought inspiration from abroad. Preservation and continuity were not its motivating forces; its inspiration was to move Nepal, if possible in one giant stride into the modern era. The symbols of the past, like temples, palaces and monasteries, were passé. The time was ripe for a brand new idiom. Ironically, the by-product of this spirit, so exhilarating intellectually, was the drab and alien concrete-box and the galvanized roof in architecture. Even when temples were renovated, ancient

Previous page : The Gallery Baithak where the Rastriya Panchayat (National Legislature) meets

Opposite page : His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva with Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah at the Coronation, February 1975



national recognition. Breaking away from the past when, due to the power of British imperialism, Nepal had tended to have a continuous relationship mainly with the predominant power in the south (the missions to China and a consulate in Lhasa were exceptions to this), Nepal made a deliberate and successful effort to get a foothold in the comity of nations. This not only enhanced her sovereign options but brought direct developmental benefits to the economy in the shape of aid.

Along with these major political concerns, Nepal was faced with the problem of establishing the fundamental infrastructure for modernisation. A modern administration had to be created in a country which in 1951 had hardly 300 to 400 graduates. Industry, agriculture and markets had to evolve in a nation with virtually no modern transport system; the cadres for development had to be found in a state with the minimal number of schools; electricity, irrigation, health, basic needs, were all areas where Nepal had to start from scratch. Although the political instability of the fifties prevented efforts in these directions from making much of a dent against the problem, they certainly were the major concern after politics. In the field of education, local initiative and the voluntary efforts of ordinary citizens to break out of ignorance achieved more than the government. In the years of national challenge, 1960-62, major social reforms in the direction of egalitarianism, such as the new social code and land reforms, were enacted. Although the land reforms were not to be an undiluted success, they did eliminate the notorious system of absentee landlordism, and in certain areas where there was a conscious peasantry, improved the lot of tenants in a marked manner. Apart from the numerous investments in infrastructure and education which successfully altered the face of the primitive economy in the sixties, the government galvanised the machinery of local panchayats in major areas of public works, such as the east-west highway along the Terai.

In a period of such intense political activity and economic compulsions, it could not be expected that the arts, particularly the preservation and continuity of old cultural traits, would receive anything but marginal attention. Despite this, a Department of Archaeology was set up under the Ministry of Education in 1952. The 'Prachin Smarak Samrakshan Ain' (the law to preserve antiquities) protecting any monument older than a hundred years and levying, at least in theory, fines or punishment for damage, pilferage and disfigurement of such antiquities, was promulgated in 1956. In the same year, the Upatyaka Nirman Samiti (the Valley construction committee) was set up. It took up, along with the Public Works Department, among other tasks of public construction, the repair and renovation of some old temples. As Bannerjee points out: "The idea of preserving the ancient architectural styles and achievements had not formed part of the inspiration to preserve, reconstruct or repair (at that time), for all these works have been undertaken in the past with a view primarily to ensuring the functions they had been serving."[2] The chairman of the Upatyaka Nirman Samiti, who was also the provincial governor of Kathmandu Valley, was a very powerful and dynamic man who carried out repairs with great gusto. He is reputed, for instance, to have spruced up the city within two months to prepare

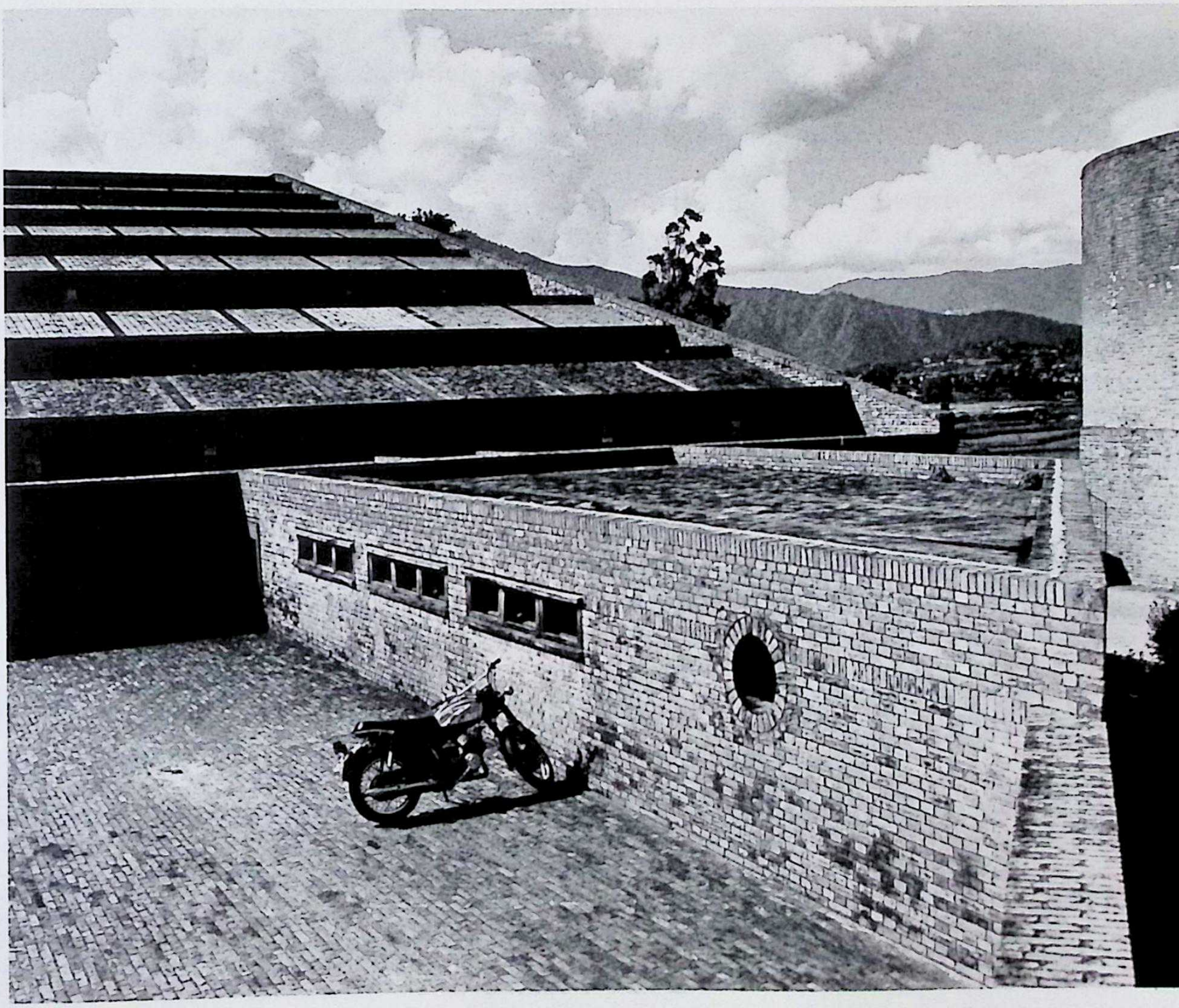
Opposite page : A Shikar Mural in the Gallery Baithak for the state visit of Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain. Unfortunately, he was totally innocent of cultural or ecological sensibilities. It is to his drive that we owe, for instance, the cutting down of trees, decades old, that graced the avenues of Kathmandu; putting up in their place those strange, ugly concrete posts whose only purpose is to fly flags when major ceremonies are held. It is to his ingenuity that we owe the curious act of painting bronze equestrian statues, and to his enthusiasm that we owe the replacement in quite a few old temples of fine woodwork with cement and the pagoda roofs with stunted tin roofs. So the works of the Upatyaka Nirman Samiti, with the best of intentions, caused more setbacks to the preservation of cultural ecology than any substantial achievements in it. In this sense, the low priority accorded to this task was a blessing in disguise as it spared the majority of monuments from their invidious attentions. There is little doubt that the depredations of nature and temporal decay were comparatively less disastrous.

An even greater threat to the artistic heritage was the sedulous cupidity of the foreign scholars-cum-collectors who entered Nepal in this period. Nepal, at this time, was blissfully unaware of the value of her cultural legacy. The Nepalis took the beauty of their antique heritage for granted; there was such a vast profusion of artefacts, that it was unlikely that the value of each item should strike them. The affable hospitality and smiling generosity of the Nepali temperament has often been remarked on by visitors; it was unlikely that such a guileless nation would withhold access to such antiquities from tactful and persistent foreigners. In time, these scholarly entrepreneurs found some able Nepali collaborators in this vastly profitable trade. Despite the new law of 1956, enforcement was difficult when artefacts galore were available in outlying sites, when the idols and paintings of important monuments were uncatalogued, when many of these fine antiquities were in the private keeping of comparatively poor priests and caretakers. As a result, during the fifties and sixties, antiquities went out of Nepal. Today, the best and most antique Thankas or Paubha [scroll paintings] are to be found in foreign museums and private collections instead of within the country. Much of the best work in metal has also entered the annals of invisible exports. Even stone sculptures and wood carvings have fallen prey to this enterprise. Fortunately, in the rudimentary transport system of the fifties and sixties, architecture at least was immune to theft.

Around the mid-sixties, when the state had achieved full stability and the major lines of development were set, the minds of some decision-makers turned to the need for true preservation and restoration of antiquities and the means of establishing effective security for them. This consciousness was encouraged by the growth of tourism. Whereas in the past, visitors had come for official or scholastic reasons, gradually people began to come from abroad with the specific purpose of admiring the wonders of Nepal. The growing number of such visitors made it clear that the lure of Nepal lay not only in the beauty of its natural environment, but also in the monuments amidst that natural environment. So the ordinary Nepali finally began to be aware of his legacy.

At governmental levels also, the importance of this task gained priority. In 1966, the Archaeology Department took up the task of repairs. It was supported by the Guthi Samsthan (a central body in charge of all religious trusts), so repair evolved into restoration. But a systematic attempt at restoration and preservation required the renewal of royal patronage. The return of the then Crown Prince, Birendra Bikram Shah Dev, educated at Eton, Japan and Harvard with his aesthetic sensibilities honed to a fine edge, and himself a painter, was to provide this. This factor, along with the aid of international institutions such as UNESCO, was to open a new and creative chapter in the field of restoration which we shall deal with at a later stage.

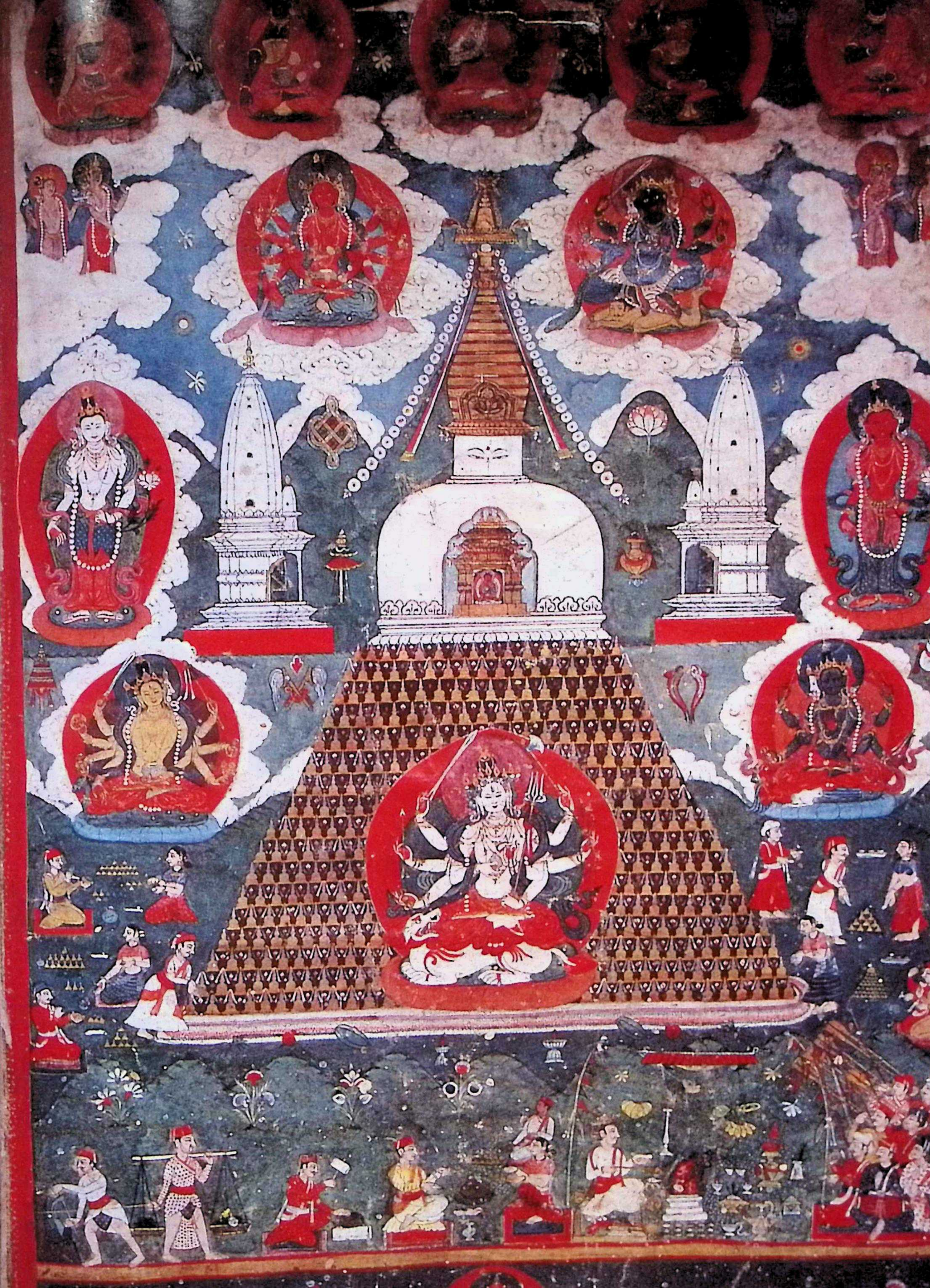
More to the point, by the mid-sixties, Nepal had come to a critical point in her cultural development. As we have seen, its quintessential non-revolutionary nature



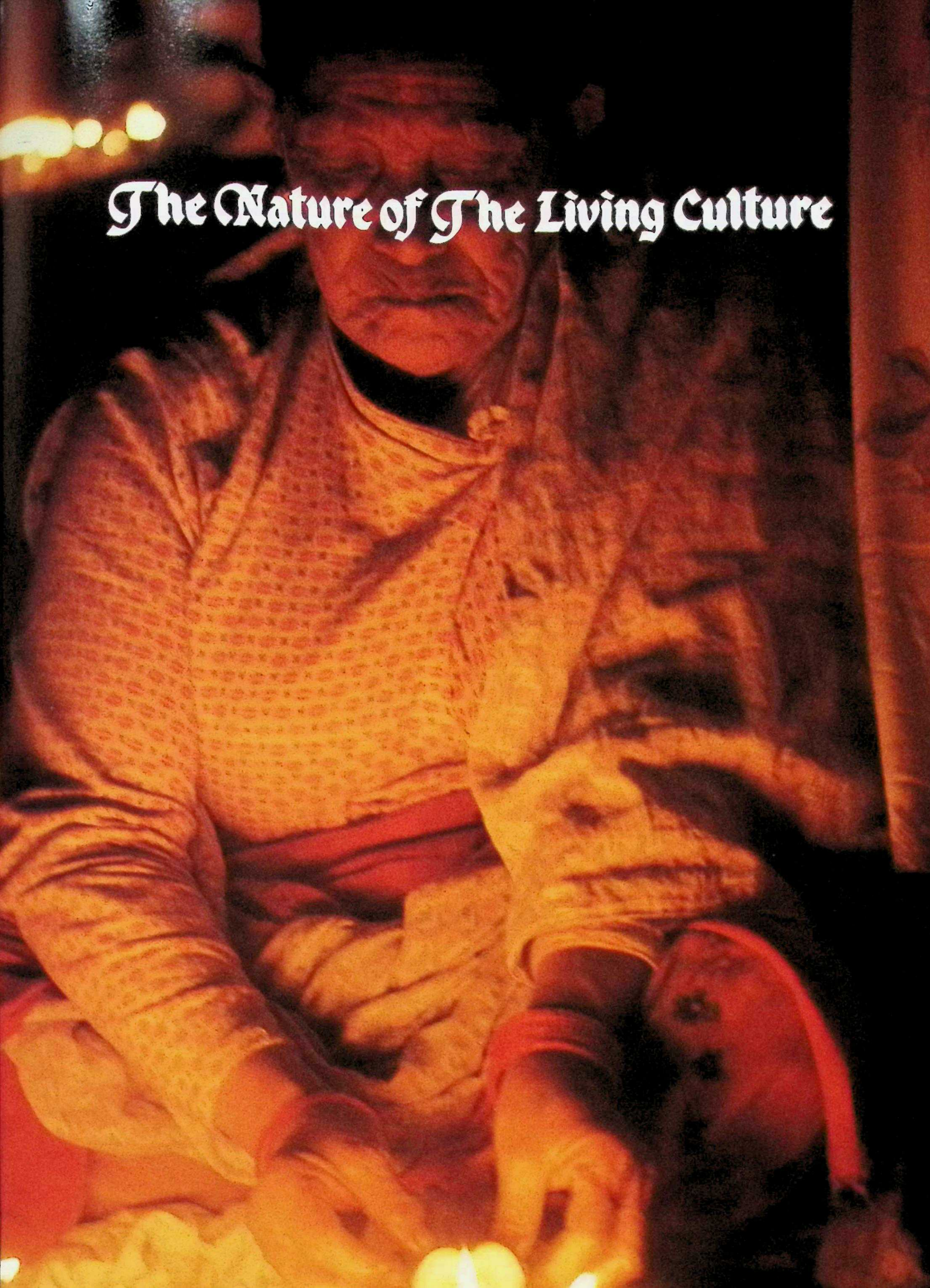
Bricks, the mainstay of traditional architecture, used in an inspired modern interpretation of the Nepali style of architecture, CEDA building

— a gradual and moderate evolution combined with such amazing adaptability and absorptive capacity — permitted her to digest vastly different ideas, forms and styles into her own idiosyncratic pattern of growth with hardly a ripple on the surface of her culture. When the walls of her isolation suddenly crumbled, she was faced with a totally new cultural challenge. Technology had reduced the effectiveness of natural barriers, crossed the Himalayas by aviation and by roads and radio communication; eradication of malaria had opened up the Terai to free and easy access, allowing external influences to crowd into the Valley, penetrating the mountains and the surrounding jungles. This massive and unprecedented cultural onslaught from outside, which gathered momentum from the fifties to the sixties, in a sense caught Nepalese society unawares. The 'closed' state had been dismantled for compelling politico-economic reasons, and in the exhilaration of that new dawn, its cultural consequences were not calculated. It took over a decade-and-half before Nepal became conscious of these factors and began to look for solutions for them. So, culturally, Nepal in the late sixties found itself at a new crossroad. Were its roots strong and resilient enough to channel and digest the thrusting force of the outside world? Or would Nepal, too, fall prey to that universal similitude, that deadening uniformity of Western-oriented mass culture? It is to this question that we will address ourselves in the latter part of this book.

Opposite page: A Thanka depicting the Jyotirupa Swayambhu Chaitya with Ushnishavijaya, 1695 A.D.



The Nature of The Living Culture



Even today, the first impact of the cultural artefacts in the Valley is their bewildering quantity. Art abounds in such profusion in this Valley that, at times, in the narrow lanes in the heart of the city, you feel as if the city itself is bursting apart at its seams with its teeming art. Every lane and corner seems to have its own shrine, every courtyard its own magnificently carved struts and windows. The very quantity of its art lends the Kathmandu Valley the air of some vast open museum; one that you can meander through forever, always coming across something new, something exceptional. Leave alone the major palace squares and the many temples, as you walk through ordinary narrow lanes in the nooks and crevices of the three cities, you stumble onto small but exquisite Chaityas (stupas); if you raise your eyes you see marvellously carved wood-work. Amidst dirt and squalor, stray dogs and debris, you find a little statuette, or a beautiful antique. A little further along you see a little medallion in stone standing out against the green slime of damp on a crumbling wall. At the side of pools seething with the scum of centuries, fantastic carved spouts lie uncared for and uncaring of their environment. It is as if the history of the Valley bursts through its pores, like divine sweat. Nor is it the urban parts alone that are the proud possessors of this wonderful profusion. If you go to the outskirts, in villages like Changu Narayan, Pharping or Sankhu, or just outside the Valley in the area of the erstwhile Bhote Rajya in Banepa, Nala or Panauti, some of the finest wood carvings, bronzes, pagodas or sculptures going back to Licchavi times can be found.

If the quantity of art is daunting, its quality is no less noteworthy. The elegant symmetry of the pagodas, the exquisite detail of the wood carvings, the fine expression and lustre of Licchavi sculpture, all indicate an unusually high pitch in art. In murals or in temples or in stupas — patiently and persistently — a widely-based anonymous class of artisans has manifested its devotion to beauty and faith, keeping the fervour of its tradition alive from generation to generation. There is still a great deal of superb art and architecture in the Valley.

It is neither the quality nor the quantity of art that gives the Kathmandu Valley its unusual appeal. It is not in these artefacts and monuments alone that Nepalese culture resides. It is rather in the unbroken continuity of its tradition, in the vigour of religious faith, and in the living ecology around the monuments. The monuments are an integral part of the way of life of the citizen. Every evening the light of many oil wicks, lit in devotion, illuminates the beauty of the idols. These lamps burn at the same hour, in the same way as they did when Nepalis lived under the rule of the Licchavis in the fifth century A.D. These lamps renew and revive that long, unbroken tradition every day. Nor is this faith confined to sacred places. Every temple is redolent with incense, every idol dyed with the vermillion mark of devotion. Almost every day at one part of the Valley or the other there is a festival consecrated to some god. On that day, that temple becomes the centre of life for that community. Like living beings, the gods are taken out of their temples, placed in chariots drawn by devotees, and taken sometimes on a journey lasting nearly a week, with a throng of celebrating

Previous page: Newar couple lighting diyos (oil lamps) at the Seto Macchendranath festival

Opposite page : Worshipping is part of the daily routine of even the young devotees following in procession. Just as there are no barriers between the temples and the private houses, so do the monuments blend inextricably with the rhythm of civic life and of the seasons. Unlike the other great monuments being preserved, unlike Borobudur, unlike the Acropolis, the Valley's culture is not a fossilised record arrested on stone, brick or wood. Her culture is the life-blood of the people. Kathmandu's heritage is a living, breathing reality for its people.

The temples, unlike a Western church, are not separated in a formal manner from everyday life. Schools are run in the enclosure of a temple or monastery. Tradesmen put up stalls in the courtyards or corridors to sell their wares. The pujari's (priest's) family may live in a part of the temple. Temple eaves may be used to dry laundry. Or you may find the odd juxtaposition of a barber plying his trade by the side of a statue of Ganesh. People dry and winnow their grain in the courtyards or store their produce in the outhouses. They tie livestock to the pillars and hang corn or chillies from the rafters without compunction and without any dilution of their fervour or awe towards the gods and their shrines. Religion and its monuments are an integral part of their life. There is no conflict between the needs of humdrum life and piety towards the temples. This total integration is probably a legacy of the original culture of the subcontinent as it existed before the Muslim invasions. Secluded from the pervasive influence of the West for two centuries, the opening up of Nepal in the last three decades seems to have made no major impact on this continuing way of life. The cultural roots are perhaps too strong. Even those Nepalis who spend years studying abroad return to Nepal and seem somehow to fit back into the mainstream of faith and fervour without feeling 'an alien at home' like Nehru. The zeal to transform the economy, to bring dynamism into politics or administration, to even change certain redundant social mores, does not somehow extend to the field of religion. Nor do these modernising motivations seem to break the bonds of family and community, except in rare cases. This pervasive and sinuous hold of tradition is perhaps an exceptional feature of Nepalese society. In Nepal, the government runs according to the old Hindu 'Bikram Sambat' calendar. Despite the tremendous demand for skilled workers and the attraction of high wages, the important festivals and the rituals of the Guthi (a kind of familial or local guild) continue to draw away modern labourers on the required days, to the annoyance of contractors and other employers. The major rituals like the Sradha (an annual ritual which a son performs for his dead parent and/or ancestors) or Kuldevta puja (the collective worship of the clan gods by all the clan members), both of which occur on unpredictable days due to the individual dates of such occasions, are allowed for and holidays permitted in both the administrative system and the organised business sector. Modernisation has continued alongside the old mores of Hinduism and Buddhism.

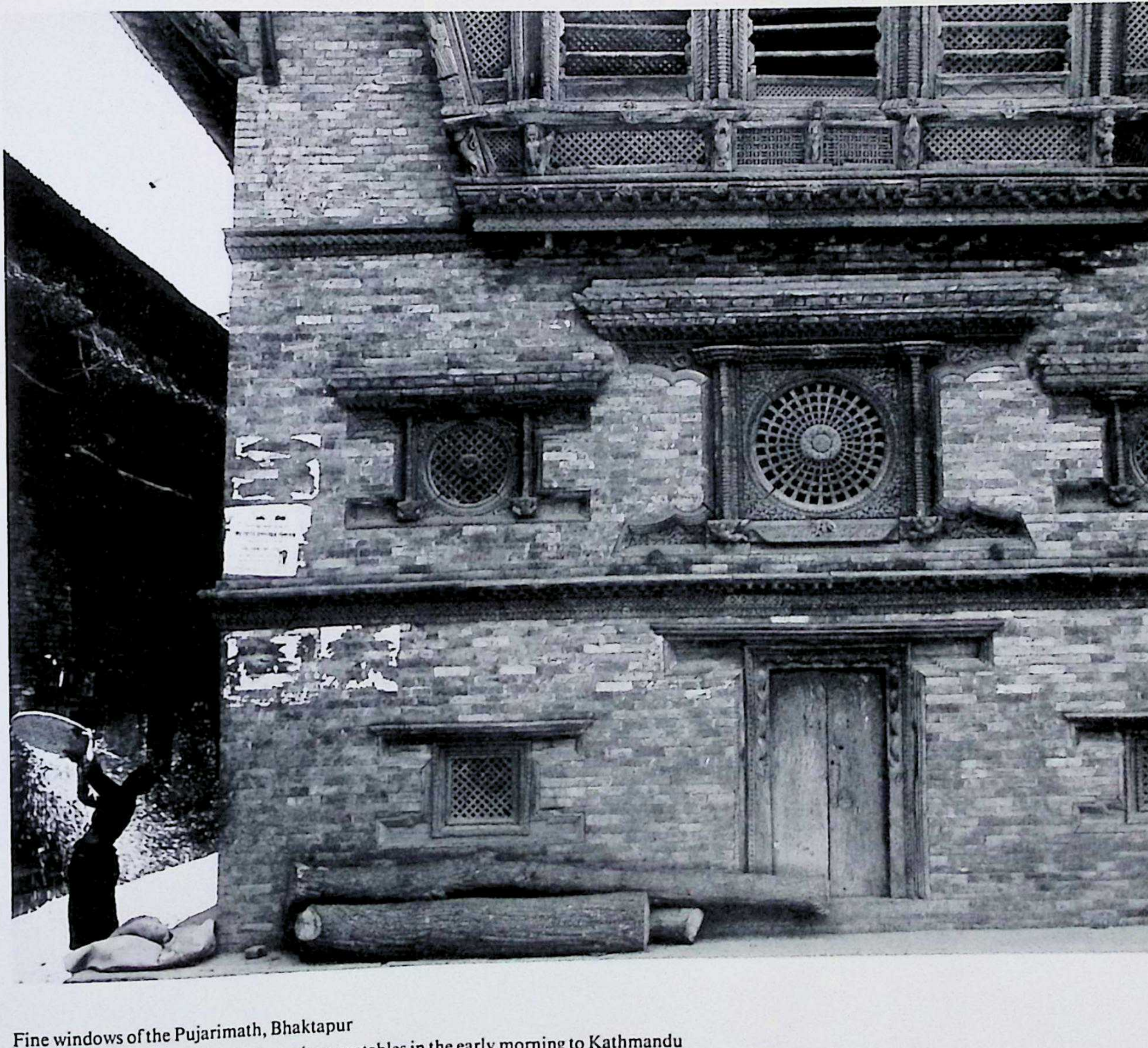
Perhaps one of the reasons for the strength and persistence of religion is that both Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed in harmony and flexibility in Nepal. Religion has seldom been rigid or combative. Tantrism which interpenetrated both and brought them together may also have made religion more down-to-earth and practical. There is no record in Nepalese history of war between two conflicting domestic religions. Not only Hindus and Buddhists, but also the followers of other religions, such as Islam, have found a sufficiently tolerant environment in Nepal. The mountainous nature of the country has possibly contributed to this. Nepal is perhaps one of the rare parts of the Hindu world where there is a concept of 'almost' untouchability. When you have to walk up and down a hill for two to four hours to fetch a vessel of water, it is extremely difficult to go back for another heavy load of water just because an outcaste happens to touch it. In such a situation in the hills, people tend to turn a blind eye to the fact that the vessel was touched by an outcaste, and claim that it was 'almost' touched. They rail at the unfortunate outcaste, and chastise him in the same manner as if he had touched the water vessel, but neatly avoid having to journey up and down for hours again to carry water. So the concept of 'almost' touching inevitably came into practice. Tantric cults have modified caste practices, so that in a number of temples in the Valley, such as the Maitidevi temple, the priests are untouchables. So a sub-caste of untouchables such as the Pode (sweeper) in the Maitidevi temple may enjoy a privileged position within the temple precincts. In an extension of this spirit, during the Rana regime, when a Maharaja took a delectable mistress from a sub-caste the whole sub-caste was elevated by administrative fiat to touchable status. Similarly, there is a story that during the second Tibetan war, Nepali soldiers invading Tibet were in a quandary because they could get no meat in those parts. Since troops could not be deprived of meat and the only obstacle was that yaks were upto then considered members of the divine cow family, Jung Bahadur passed a fiat declaring that yaks no longer belonged to the cow species. It is this innate flexibility in the practice of religion that has contributed to its continued strength and, therefore, augurs well for its future.

An interesting characteristic of Nepalese monuments is their miniature

Right : The ancient and the monstrous are familiar to the children size. There are no towering spires here, no vaulting arches in gigantic structures. From the Licchavi period right down to the Malla times the Valley was a small urban civilization. Its prosperity was based on trade with the north and south as well as on the fertility of the land. The patrons of both art and architecture were the kings, merchants, priests and feudals. They could only finance architecture that was comparatively small in scale. The only exceptions to this are the palaces of the Rana period, made possible by the exploitation of the surplus from Terai lands and forests after the building of railways up to the Nepalese borders.

Nor can these splendid instances of man's genius be taken apart from their natural setting. The incomparably beautiful landscape, where the austere majesty of the Himalayas dominates an intricate network of forested hill-sides, fields and streams, provides the inverted commas between which the city makes its artistic statement. The margins between the city and countryside are indistinct. Even today, with a building boom in full swing for over a decade, you can still find paddy fields between pagodas and five-star hotels. Many urban workers still take time off to work in their fields at planting time and harvest. The functions of their rural guilds (Guthis) still dominate and provide the framework for their social existence. The point is that although Kathmandu is one of the oldest urban civilizations, it has never divorced itself from its rural nexus. This intermingling of the rural and the urban, of the natural and artistic, an intermingling impossible in most urban conglomerations, gives life in Kathmandu its own special flavour. If you go out before dawn towards Bhaktapur from Kathmandu in the first misty light of the pre-dawn, you can see the peasants of Thimi carrying their vegetables on kharpans (two large, round wicker baskets supported on a bamboo pole across the shoulders) to the market in Kathmandu. The Jyapus of Thimi whose productivity and crop rotation is the highest in Nepal are market farmers without peers — a hardworking, skilled rural class catering entirely to metropolitan needs. This is typical of the way the city and countryside collaborate in the Valley. The growth of an urban civilization in an extremely fertile Valley, created an intermeshing in which the growth of the urban system expanded the production and prosperity of the rural system. The close proximity of the market meant that the barrier of intermediaries between the consumer and the agricultural producer was, and is, thin. Rural activity was paying and its productivity continued to rise because it was juxtaposed so close to the city market. This economic factor accounts for the vibrant rural life in and around Kathmandu.

This socio-economic reality is reflected in the lifestyle of the Valley. During harvest as you move through that uncertain margin between city and countryside, you begin to find dried paddy spread over the cemented roads so that the traffic can thresh the paddy. In Kathmandu, even on modern roads, you can drive through paddy. In Bhaktapur or Patan, in Baudha or Swayambhu, as you walk along the streets you see town houses festooned with bright red chillies and white garlic, or used to store and hang bunches of dry corn. Most households, except those in the heart of the city, still have paddy fields or vegetable patches. Often, they also keep cows. The change of the season — the turmoil of the monsoons, the mellow colours of harvest or the sharp air and clarity of winter sunlight, each enhances the monuments. In the bright radiant sunlight that ensues after a tropical downpour, for instance, the countryside glistens like the curves of an oiled body. This background brings out the warm tones of the brick architecture, and the gold highlights of the roofs gain added poignancy in contrast to the passionate greens of the fields. Similarly, in some Rana palaces, lines of Ashade trees have been planted along the drives so that during a couple of months their pink and white blossoms burst forth (like cherry blossoms in Japan) to enhance the neo-classical architecture. In winter, the whole panorama opens up from pagoda tips to Himalayan peaks. A fantastic configuration of wonderful scenes becomes available, from the early mornings shrouded in mist when the



Fine windows of the Pujarimath, Bhaktapur

Overleaf : Farmers from Thimi carrying vegetables in the early morning to Kathmandu

Valley comes through like a Chinese landscape, to the luminous beauty of Swayambhunath under a full moon at midnight. Above all, the bright sunlight of winter days lends its own tang to the environment. The clear air and the vivacious sky impart a glow, a vividness, to all that lies beneath it. In this way, the culture of the Valley is rooted in its natural context and the city fits comfortably into its rural milieu. Art and nature, culture and life have achieved a happy symbiosis.

The agro-urban nature of Kathmandu has been maintained principally due to the fact that although Kathmandu has been the administrative and political centre of Nepal for over two centuries, and the commercial entrepôt for over a thousand years before that, only recently have industries been established in the Valley. Centres of industry exist mainly in the Terai. Among the new industries that have come up in Kathmandu, the principal ones are still in the service sector, like hotels or cottage industries catering for the tourist trade. In the first category, there are mainly white-collar workers. In the second, the labour force is small, often familial and tends to be scattered. A large part of the labour in other industries also tends to come from farming families. So a deracinated proletariat has not yet emerged as a force in the Valley. As a result, employment patterns have not yet broken the ties of the Guthi or the community or the semi-rural orientation of the labour force. There is an increase in the growing migrant labour from both the hills and the south, and the trend could soon modify the situation. Another important factor in the continued strength of the rural milieu, is the success of tenancy reform in the Valley. The peasants in the Valley were conscious of their rights due to the spread of literacy and easy access to the urban market, and when land reform was introduced the producer-tenants quickly asserted their claims. At the same time, they promptly adopted new seeds, chemical fertilizers and improved methods, and made sure that the resultant increase in production remained with them instead of allowing absentee landlords to lap up that part of the increment. The prosperity of farm life meant that the magnetism of urban employment was somewhat mitigated.

While these striking features explain something of the nature of the cultural ecology, the nature and tradition of art in the Valley require further definition. The temples and most of the monuments of Nepal being a part of everyday life cannot be understood out of the context of their use — ceremonies, beliefs and practices that the local people use them for. They are part of the local culture, their continuity essential to the community. It is not art in the sense of a Rodin sculpture or a Rubens painting which has an aesthetic purpose of its own. It is mostly art with a defined religious purpose, in the service of a definite community. Like the medieval cathedrals of Europe, the art is fundamentally and intensely religious. As Percy Brown puts it, "There is no 'unmeaning ornament', almost every element in its composition being emblematic of the creed it adorns. In other words, art was utilised by the priest craft to catch the eye of the illiterate many, to put before those who could not read a visible, tangible object which illustrated a legend or emphasised a dogma. And to do this it required to be powerfully dramatic, to depict to the masses the Good and the Bad in its most graphic and forceful interpretation. So that the Nepalese artist either elevates the observer by the transcendental nature of his celestial conceptions, or terrorises him into docility by his suggestions of purgatory. It is an art, therefore, as far as the people are concerned, which inspires awe, veneration and is worshipped rather than admired."[1] In such an art form 'originality' was never the objective. That is a purely aesthetic goal. The nature of religious art is to express some aspect of the divine and the infinite in a representational formula which will be readily understood by the ordinary man. To the artist this religious purpose was paramount. Although some like Arniko were to rake in the renown and the wages of such skilful toil, the artist was not working for posterity. His skills were passed on by apprenticeship in the family and community — there lay his continuity. In undertaking a work of art, he was performing an act of worship. Not only would he prepare himself ritually and spiritually for the task, he would also choose an auspicious moment to start and complete his work.[2] He did this as he believed that the efficacy of his representation and its proper consecration, even its artistic character (in the sense of the religious impact it had on the beholder or rather the worshipper), depended on these factors.[3] As a believer, the artist was probably heedless of his anonymity or fame, since his returns were more in the hereafter than now. Art in this sense was a deliberate imitation. Whatever individuality, innovation or originality emerged, despite the artist's intentions, was accidental.

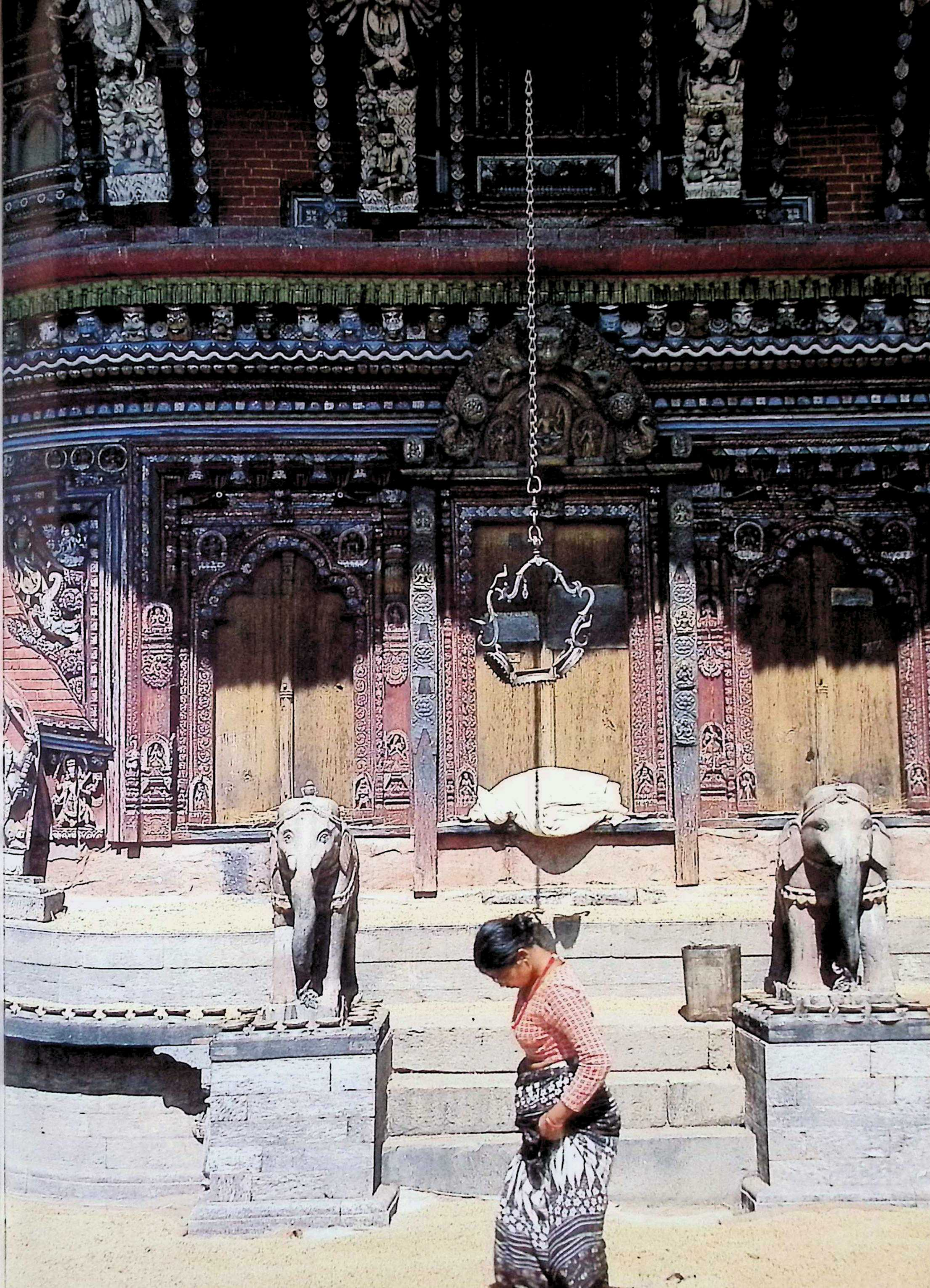
Nor were these pieces meant to adorn private galleries, though in the case of individual commissions they may well have been meant for the private prayer rooms of kings, feudals or merchants. Even in such cases, since the objective was often a practical religious purpose to propitiate some god, or to prevent certain astrologically-predicted hazards, or to further a particular goal that the particular image of a particular deity alone could perform, or possibly to facilitate concentration on a particular symbol for

Right : Vegetables hung to dry in front of a town house spiritual elevation — these images required the same strict observances on the part of the artists. "But, by and large in Newar society, the finest creations were placed on occasion, and sometimes permanently, in the street, on the temple wall or in the square for all passers-by to see. Paintings are still hung on temple and vihara walls on the occasion of the Buddha's birthday, and certain statues are taken out in procession through the streets with night-time stopover halts at predetermined points of a town, on particular days in the year. One cannot imagine that much-travelled lady, the Mona Lisa, would ever be exposed to the public gaze on the Place de la Concorde because the President was due to pass that way. But in Nepal, many of the finest painted banners will be exposed to view on such occasions as a royal coronation or the sovereign's return to the Valley after a state visit to a foreign nation ... such images were esteemed not because of their artistic or financial value, but because of their spiritual potency. Newar art is a directly accessible aspect of human experience, just as making a living, looking at a landscape or a show, chatting to one's fellows, praying to gods ... are also part of the same experience."[4]

If the sculptor or the architect approaches these artefacts with a religious objective, the same is true of the ordinary Nepali. While the beauty of an image no doubt enhances his ability to meditate, or while the elegance of a temple environment undoubtedly elevates him subconsciously, these are essentially by-products. A Nepali will approach a beautiful temple or a venerated natural stone with the same fervour and veneration. There are still unadorned sites whose religious efficacy and sanctity have been recently 'discovered'. This factor can best be illustrated by a fable. According to legend, the famous statue of the reclining Vishnu (at Buddhanilkanta) was at one time buried under the debris of time and lying beneath a ploughed field. A worker, while digging the earth, cut a part of the statue, which he no doubt at first considered a troublesome rock requiring removal. He miraculously saw the stone bleed. The story brought many to worship this strange and wondrous new site which was only much later excavated with care, exposing the magnificent Licchavi sculpture. Such stories draw crowds of devotees to all sorts of rocks and stones. Like many others, the famous Devi of Palchok, in an area in the hills about a day-and-a-half's trek north of Sankhu, has remained without any temple built over it for ages. Although it has Guthi land consecrated to it, a hereditary priest serving the deity, and ornaments presented by generations of devotees, it lies in the open, an ordinary unsculpted rock embedded in the earth which receives the sacrifice of its worshippers under sun and sky.

To the devotee, the objective of worship is often practical. There is, for instance, a Vakal system. The devotee vows to either sacrifice a certain number of animals, to provide a particular ornament or offer a certain sum of money, if the god or goddess will either remove some difficulty from his path or grant him some particularly prized wish. So he comes to a particular temple not because of its aesthetic quality, but because it is renowned for fulfilling certain purposes. The Dakshinkali temple to

Opposite page: Drying grain at Changu Narayan



the south-east of the Valley and the Manakamana temple in Gorkha are famous for these purposes. Others go to temples or on pilgrimages to achieve 'punya' – that is to cleanse themselves of the greed, emotion, tensions, etc., of ordinary life. Some combine a morning walk with paying homage at a particular shrine.

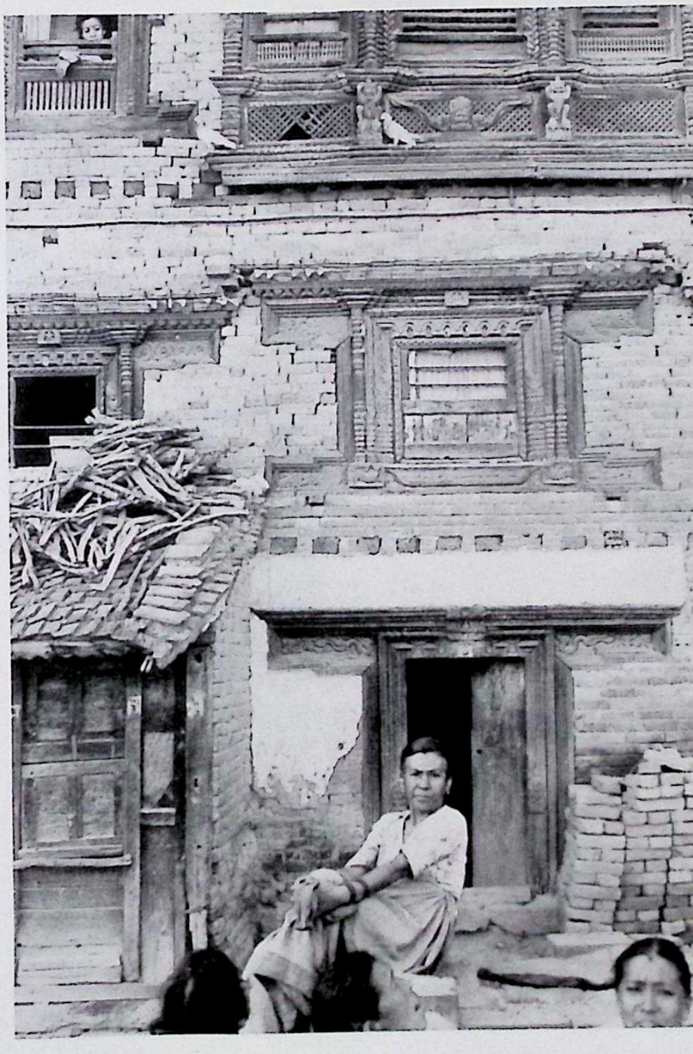
These are but a few instances of the vast variety of motives for worship. The aesthetic objective does not colour any of these motives. It is this distinction between religious and artistic purposes that caused some of the renovations of the twentieth century to disrupt the aesthetic integrity of repaired sites. In fact, in some of the most antique brass and stone idols one of the causes of erosion is continuous worship. The idol is touched, decorated, washed, and over the centuries wears out in parts due to these acts of veneration. This very different approach to religion between that of the West and that to be found in Nepal can be seen in other aspects. Cathedrals and churches are constructed to collect devotees in a common act of worship. The individual orientation of the Westerner means that religion, formally and structurally, has to deliberately bring believers together; religion has a deliberate organisational purpose. In Nepal, the natural orientation of man towards his community or extended family, this innate sense of social belonging, does not require bonding by religion. This is true not only of Nepal but of Hindu society in general. Hindus accept the intrinsic collectivity of Society. This explains the non-militant and non-proselytizing character of Hinduism. In both the Hindu temple and the Buddhist stupa in Nepal, the structure is designed for individual or, at the most, familial acts of worship. Unlike the Christian church and the Islamic mosque which are designed to accommodate large congregations for corporate acts of worship, in a Nepalese temple no more than three to five people (and in effect the objective is to provide room for a single person's worship) can pay their homage or proffer their sacrifices at one time. The act of worship is a personal communion with the deity, mediated by a priest for this private purpose. It is an act of intense concentration, following on the principle of meditation in abbreviation when the temple is crowded, at length when circumstances permit. In addition, no private home is complete without a room or at least a corner consecrated to prayer where the devotee can carry out his daily meditation. The structure of the temple is designed to accommodate: (a) the private act of worship in an extension of worship at home (b) to go around the sacred precincts to complete the ritual of worship. So, often the sanctuary is no more than four square metres, with a small verandah around which devotees walk after their prayers.

This, of course, does not mean that there are no collective religious celebrations such as the Jatra (festival) or clan religious functions. "Even during large family festivals the principle of individual worship then follows. Large public festivals are held in open spaces around the temples where numerous rest houses of all sizes and shapes provide shelter for the pilgrims."[5] These devotions in community are added supports to the essentially individual nature of worship. They are expressions in religious form of the strong community bonds as opposed to the employment of religion to tie a fragmented and centrifugal society.

Opposite page : Swayambhu by moonlight

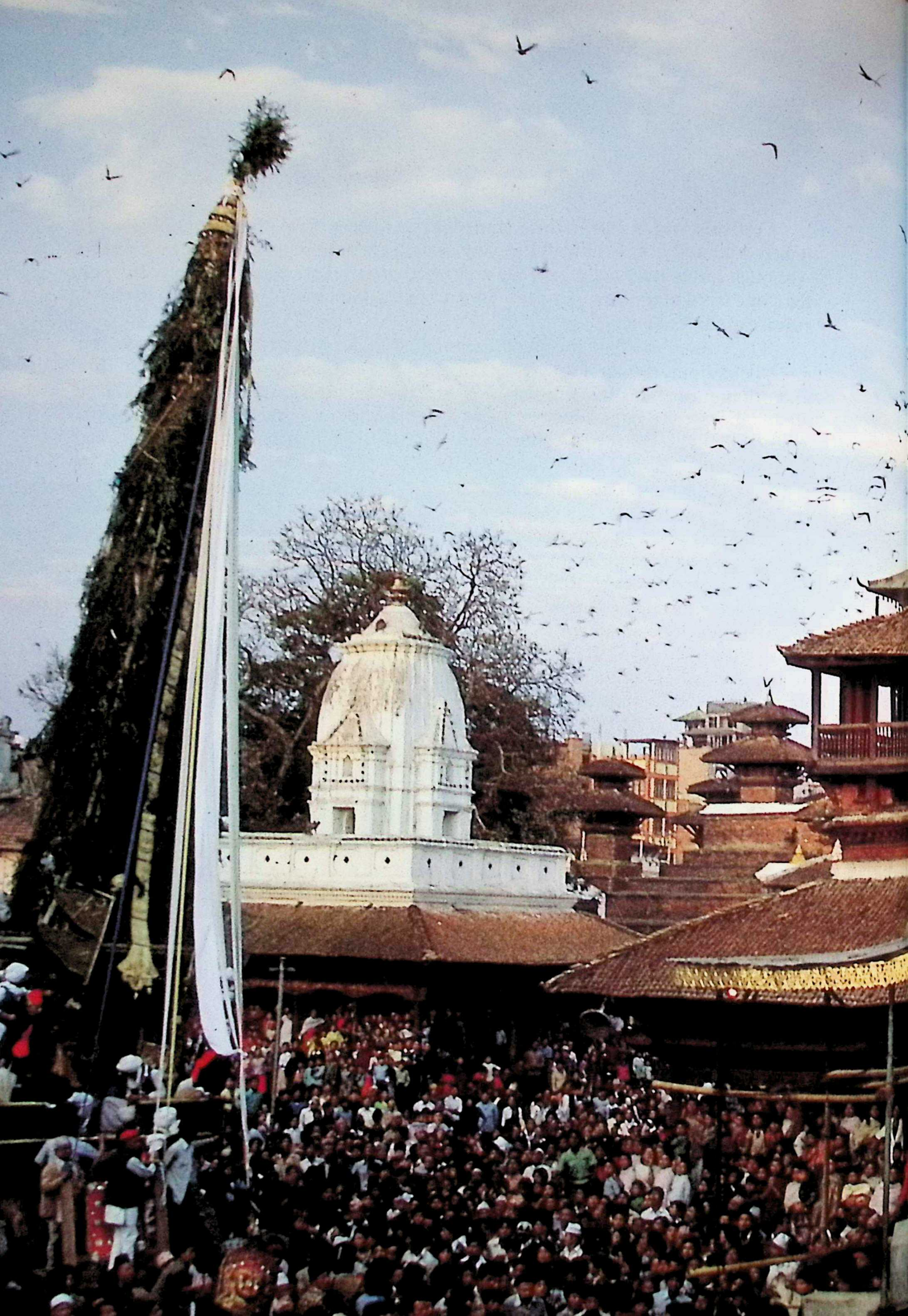
Festivals, which may in this manner be regarded as the exuberant expression of a tightly-knit and deeply religious society, are superabundant in the Valley's calendar. Although fortunately not everybody is engaged in each festival, they account for more than one third of the days in a year. Such festivals dramatically manifest all the living culture of the Valley.

The strong beliefs of the Nepalis combined with tolerance and elasticity in religious behaviour, the carefully nurtured community bonds, the intermingling of rural and urban milieu, the daily use of artefacts in the habitual practice of devotion, have all collaborated to impart a vibrant and joyous life to the aesthetic heritage of Nepal. A scene that Percy Brown describes in a temple in Bhaktapur at the time of Maharajah Chandra in the early 1900s epitomises this: "The shrine itself or at least the visible portion of it, which occupies the place of the door to the temple, is a conglomeration of metal work, but so obscured with thick grease applied in the form of offerings by devotees, as to be almost indistinguishable. Children sprawl about its pedestal, and one small imp sits triumphantly astride one of the great dragons, whose expression almost seems to enter grimly into the humour of the situation. A pretty girl in brightly coloured robes, with marigolds in her hair, approaches the shrine carrying a brass tray with offerings. She scatters a few grains of rice on the thickly daubed floor, touches her forehead, joins her hands together for one moment, and then, with a rapt expression on her face, moves away. One of the smallest of the children, clinging to the dragon, falls, and begins to cry. She comforts it by giving it a flower from her hair. A grey hen with several chicks passes into the shrine and speedily picks up the offerings of rice."[6] The same scene could be found in Nepal today, over three-quarters of a century later. The gods are familiar, the monuments a part of life, the people as religious as ever. It is this factor that instills confidence in the resilience and continuity of the living ecology of Nepalese culture.

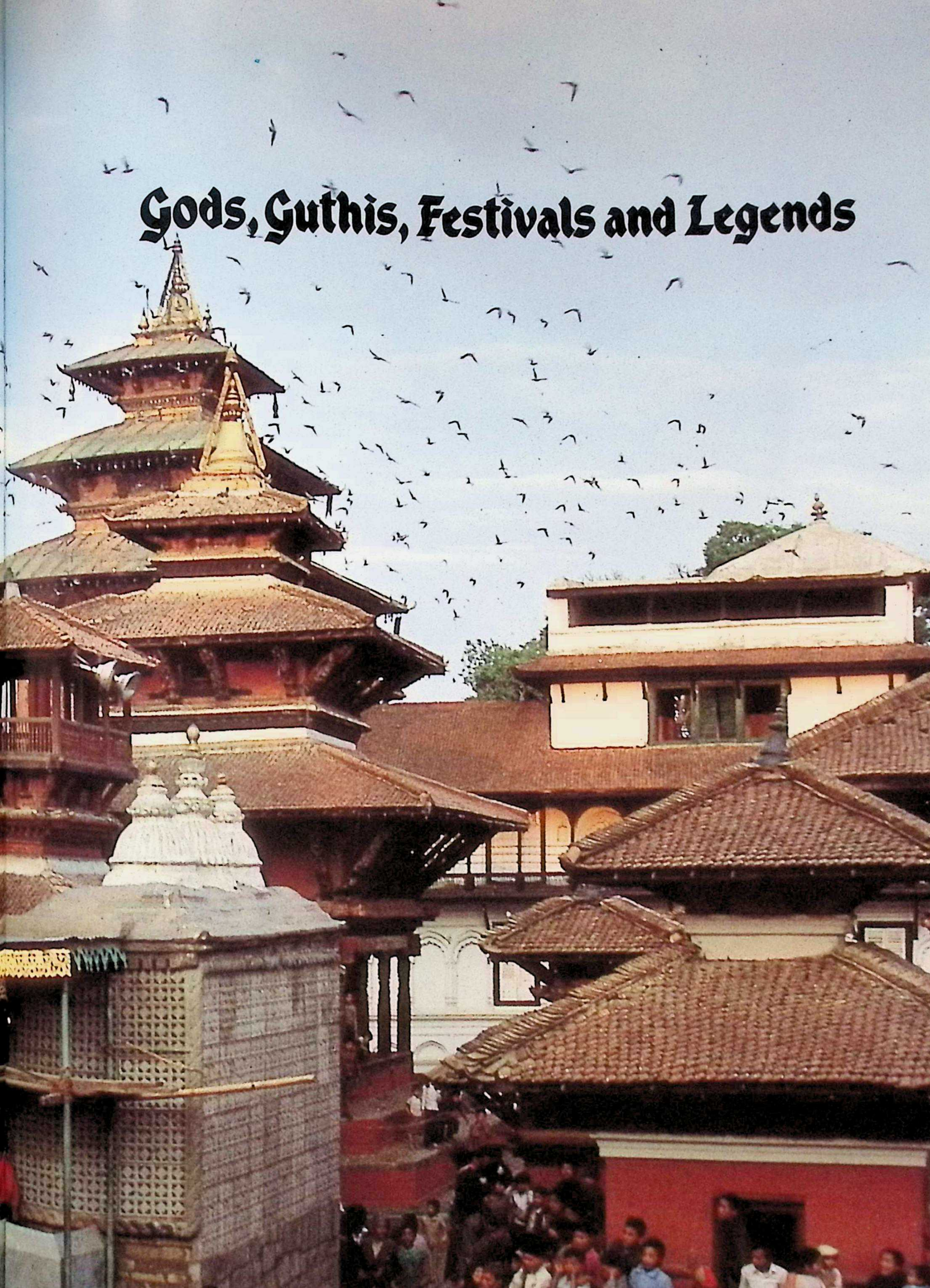


Opposite page: Jung-Hirenya-Hem Narayan Mandir at Kalmochan

Right: Groaning house with exquisite details



Gods, Guthis, Festivals and Legends



In a sense, the components of the living culture, the abiding religiousness of the people, are, firstly, the gods that inspire devotion and, secondly, the Guthis or social organisations that provide the framework through which tradition perpetuates itself; this social vehicle of continuity along with the state organisations oversees and assures the third element – the annual festivals, which are dramatic, public expressions of the depth and vigour of faith and the cohesion of society; lastly, there are rich legends which provide the theme for both the monuments and festivals, thereby fusing the grandeur of past tradition and history with the living present, and providing a network of folklore which ties the profusion of monuments into popular consciousness. Although the predominant religion is Hinduism, Buddhism and, to a lesser extent, the original animist cults that preceded these great religions, interpenetrate these components. As Slusser points out, Nepal is unique in being the only area where Buddhism and Hinduism have continuously co-existed from ancient times, their concurrent evolution unmarred by any significant interruption right upto modern times. As a result, they are, in their practice in Nepal, difficult to distinguish as distinct and separate religious systems. "Such differences in philosophical premises and doctrines as they exist are modified by the faiths' common origin in ancient Indian civilization, by the numerous features they share, and by the more than two millennia of close proximity in the small Valley... ".[1] There are remarkable similarities in both the pantheon and iconography of Nepali Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism. Religio-artistic manuals which have guided the creation of the aesthetic heritage for both bear strong affinities. Both Hindu and Buddhist practices bear the powerful imprint of Tantric ritual, are remarkably analogous and the scaffolding of caste is common to both.

The population of the Hindu pantheon defies statistical enumeration although a mythical census puts it at 300 million. To these must be added the gods adopted from Buddhism and animism. Added to this list are demons like Gurumapa and Bhat Bhatini (literally minstrel and minstrel's wife), who in Nepal have festivals or temples consecrated to them and are propitiated with prayer and sacrifice. Another addition is that of the sages who achieved Siddhi (perfection) and had great powers and knowledge. Gorakhanath, in particular, seems to be of Buddhist origin but is a patron deity of the Gorkhalis. He is reputed to have appeared before Prithvi Narayan in the guise of a fakir (holy mendicant). He asked the young Prithvi to cup his hands in front of him and vomited into the cupped hands. He bade the young man eat this vomit. Despite his reverence for the sadhu, Prithvi Narayan was too revolted to obey his injunction and spilt the vomit on his feet. At this, the sadhu revealed himself as Gorakhanath and told the future conqueror of Nepal that had he swallowed the vomit, he would have conquered the world, but as he had failed to do so and merely spilt it on his feet, he would conquer whatever area his feet walked over. However apocryphal this story may be, there is little doubt that Prithvi Narayan Shah's marches carried victory in their wake. So a vast variety of Brahminical and Vedic gods and goddesses, Buddhas and Taras, sacred serpents, sages, demons and primeval

Previous page: The chariot of Seto Macchendranath being drawn past Hanuman Dhoka
Opposite page: Kumari, the virgin goddess, in her khat (wooden chariot)

rocks of worship constitute the bewildering pantheon of Kathmandu's reverence. Gods and temples are consecrated for all sorts of odd purposes; the temple of Kandeutathan (literally 'the temple of the Ear God') is said to cure ear ailments, Bangemuda (literally 'the bent log') is a sacred block of wood in which you drive a nail to alleviate toothaches, Atak Narainthan is prayed to if you wish to ensure a male heir. The gods of Kathmandu have as specialised a profession as the various branches of medical science have from E.N.T. to gynaecology. Crows, dogs, frogs, cars, and even aeroplanes, enjoy a day of sacrifice. It would be adventurous to attempt a census of the deities and para-deities.

The jewel in the cluster is Pashupatinath, the lord of animals, lord of souls, and the overlord who protects and blesses Nepal. Pashupatinath is a name for Shiva whose forms are manifold. He is Shiva the destroyer; He is Shiva Nateswara whose dance is the dance of creation; He is the ascetic girded in loin-cloth, smeared in ashes, garlanded by snakes, emancipated from all passions and senses; He is also the husband of the beautiful Parvati, father of Ganesh and Kumar; He is Ardhanariswara in whom both the male and female principles combine. Legend has it that He came, to escape the company of other gods, to the forested Valley tenanted only by animals such as deer. This gives the name Mrigasthali (the place of the deer) to the grove across from the Pashupati temple, and the origin for the name 'lord of animals'. He is worshipped chiefly in the abstract phallic symbol of the lingam. There is a quaint story of how the other two gods of the main Hindu trilogy, Brahma and Vishnu, argued interminably as to who was the Supreme Lord of the Universe. Suddenly there appeared before the gods a lingam of pure fire whose height and roots stretched infinitely. Vishnu took on the shape of a divine boar to plumb the depths of the earth and find the origin of this fiery column, while Brahma became a fantastic swan in order to rise above the stratosphere and gauge the height of the lingam. But with all their divine effort neither of them was able to reach the origin or the end of this fiery phallus. When they returned tired and defeated, the lingam manifested itself as Shiva and answered the question of who was supreme. This story epitomises the dominance of Shiva in Nepal. In fact, although Vishnu is often also represented, Brahma for some reason is virtually unknown in the monuments of Nepal.

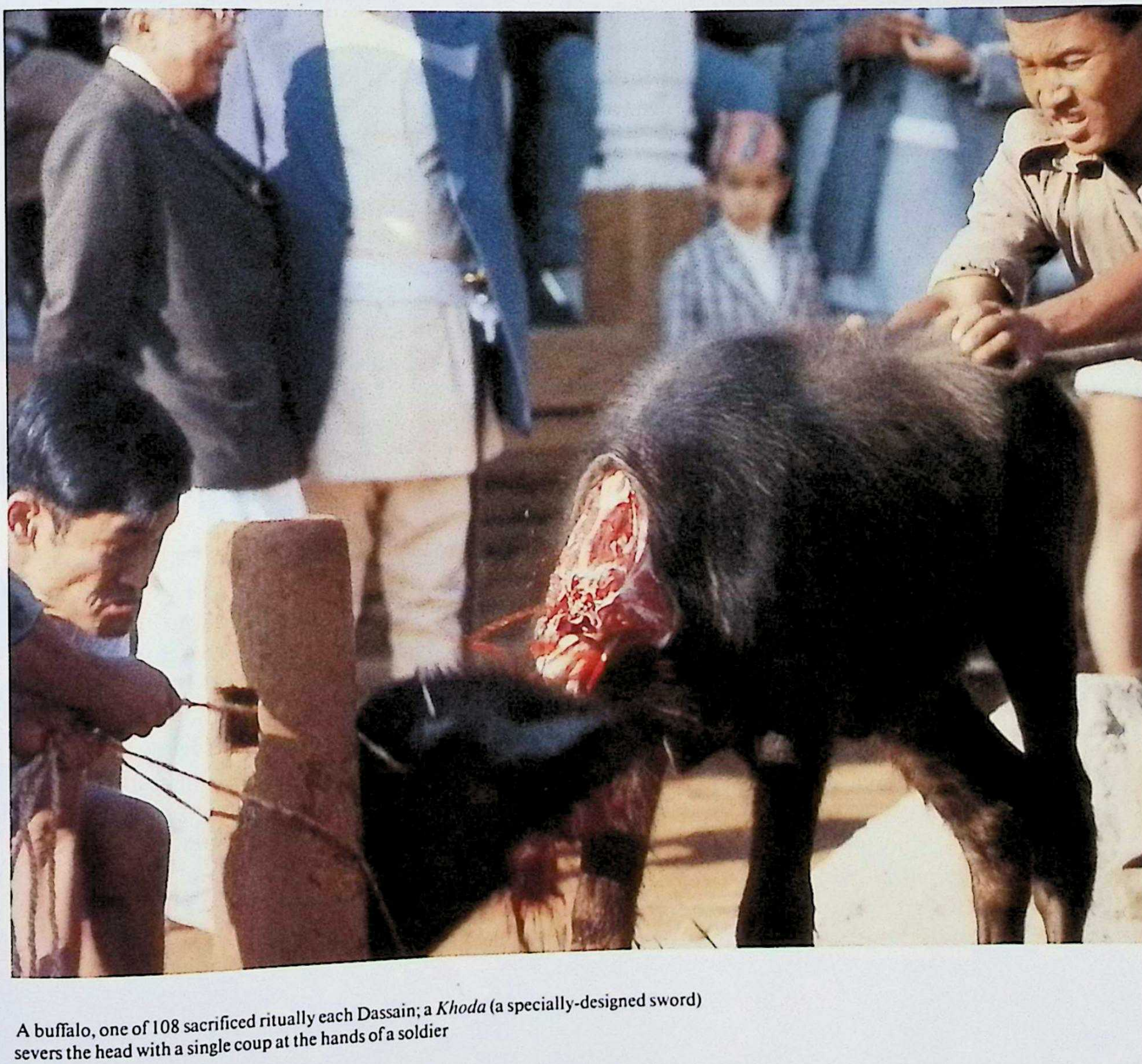
The gold-roofed temple of Pashupatinath with its enormous annexes and ghats, houses the sacred lingam. Although the first dated inscriptions refer to it in the fifth century, chronicles such as the Gopalaraja Vamsavali indicate an earlier foundation. Typically in Nepal, even this most Hindu of lingas is crowned annually on Mukhaastami (Kartik-suklastami) with a Boddhisatva crown. By the seventh century, all monarchs sanctified their reign by craving the blessings of Pashupatinath and fell into the habit of invoking Lord Pashupati on all important religious occasions. That is why the shrine is rich in relics and endowments of an artistic nature from Licchavi times right down to the present day. Shivaratri, the winter festival of this great shrine, draws Hindus from the world over. They pay homage all through the night to this inscrutable and potent divinity. If Pashupatinath enjoys the

Opposite page: A former Kumari at the Seto Macchendranath festival

reverence of the Nepalis during life, it is to his ghats, the banks of the Bagmati dominated by the golden pagoda, that Kathmanduites are brought to be cremated. The major families of the kingdom have built special dwelling-houses where the sons of the deceased live out their ascetic thirteen days of mourning, purifying themselves at the end of that period by bathing in the flowing waters blessed by this Lord, before they resume their normal routine.

The consorts of Shiva — Uma, Parvati, Durga, Devi — all represent the female principle of energy, Shakti. In these goddesses, the three streams of Hinduism, the primitive fertility cults and Vajrayana Buddhism combine inextricably — for the female principle is innate in Tantric lore. All these goddesses have their pacific and kindly aspects whether as Uma or Parvati for the Hindu, or as Tara for the Buddhists. It is in their

The Naksal Bhagwati temple, lit with oil lamps for Dassain terrifying aspect as 'Mais', demanding the sacrifice of blood and alcohol, that they exercise great influence. It is this face of Uma that the Nepali considers the most efficient in wish-fulfilment. Whereas Shiva and Vishnu are all-purpose, omnipotent gods, it is above all to these goddesses that Vakal, the contract of a votive offering for a blessing sought in this life, is offered. They are thus more familiar, more approachable and sought-after despite their dynamic and terrible forms. It is to this fierce goddess in her form as Durga, Mahisasura-Mardini (the destroyer of the atrocious demon Mahisasura, who in his guise as a giant wild buffalo laid waste the earth) that the longest and most important festival of the Nepalese calendar, Dassain, is devoted. The first nine nights (Nawa-ratri) of Dassain are particularly sacrosanct: "Here the infinitely ancient mother cult of mother earth and mother nature takes form in the worship



A buffalo, one of 108 sacrificed ritually each Dassain; a *Khoda* (a specially-designed sword) severs the head with a single coup at the hands of a soldier of Shakti, of the female (principle) depicted as the goddess Durga in all her forms."[2] Although associated in India with the tale of the Ramayana and the destruction of the demon king Ravana of Lanka, this festival is principally celebrated in Kathmandu by venerating Durga. This is the Durga who resides in the Taleju, the family deity of Nepalese kings; also Guheswari whose Yoni (female genitals) hides dreadful and secret powers beyond human understanding; she is also the Kumari, the living goddess of the Valley; here again the Buddhist and the Hindu meet because the Kumari is chosen from the Sakya caste (a Buddhist social category); she is also in her Buddhist form, the Ugratara — the ferocious Tara (the alternate of the Hindu Kali) often depicted treading on the vanquished Canada and Mundi which is part of Kali lore, adopted with typical Nepalese eclecticism to a Buddhist diety. The Dassain festival is celebrated in Patan by the nightly dance of the Asta Matrikas, the eight mother goddesses impersonated by "male dancers in goddess' masks, bedecked with jewels, head-dresses and glittering ceremonial costumes".[3] Against the backdrop of the Patan Durbar Square, amongst the finest group of temples in the Valley, an old world comes alive for nine nights. The main ceremonies in Kathmandu are the Phulpati (on the seventh day) and Naomi, the ninth day. On Phulpati, the sacred vessel of the royal Shah house is brought from Gorkha to Hanuman Dhoka and received in full official ceremony amidst processions and a full-scale army parade and *feu-de-joie,* by the king. On the ninth day, innumerable goats and buffaloes (the latter representing Mahisasura) are slaughtered according to Tantric rites in the presence of the army at Hanuman Dhoka. Thus is the victory of the goddess celebrated; the blood-soaked and carcass-strewn courtyards symbolising that struggle and sacrifice are the price of peace.

The Rato (or Red) Macchendranath festival provides an interesting instance of the transmutation of the Buddhist Lokeswara to a great sorcerer-saint, annexed as a common deity for all Valley-dwellers. The original shrine of this god in Bungamati has very ancient antecedents. Beyond the ring-road south of Patan, on a hillock overlooking the Bagmati, this god of Bungamati was already recorded in seventh-century inscriptions. In Licchavi times, the village god metamorphosed into Avalokiteswara and the jatra or festival of this Bungma-Lokeswara (another term for Avalokiteswara) was regulated by King Narendra Deva according to the chronicles.[4] By the late Malla period, the same deity had turned into Macchendranath, lord of fish (the fish being a symbol of the senses), master of the senses — in other words, a sage who had achieved Siddhi (perfection). While the transformation cannot be traced, it can be regarded as a part of the Hinduisation process consolidated by Jayasthitiraja Malla. This gathered momentum with the increasing Khasa settlement in the Valley, which preferred to see in the Buddha Lokeswara, the Shiva Lokeswara. The following legend lends credence to this.

The late chronicles tell of a 12-year drought which the king's spiritual guides divined as being caused by the cosmic heat generated by the meditation of Gorakhanath who had imprisoned the rain-giving Nagas (serpents) under the hill in Mrigasthali (near Pashupatinath) where he sat in the lotus position. The only way to break

Opposite page: The Rato Macchendranath idol

the meditation was to bring to the sage his guru Macchendranath who was in seclusion in Assam. The emissaries of the king made their quest through perilous ways aided by another snake-god. In Assam, the learned emissaries' powerful spells persuaded Macchendranath to enter his gold chalice in the form of a great black bee. Defending this chalice against all challenges of men and demons by invoking the aid of the four powerful Bhairavas, they brought the chalice to the Valley. Gorakhanath broke his meditation to pay homage to his guru, and the released Nagas brought plentiful rains. A shrine each was built to this god of rain, Macchendranath, both in Bungamati and Patan.

So Macchendranath's festival is celebrated around the time of paddy plantation. During ceremonies which last a whole month, the god is bathed, coloured and installed in a veritable juggernaut with a fantastically tall spire with a wooden cross-piece decorated in green foliage, so that the chariot seems to have an immense tree crowning its roof like a plume. This fantastic and unwieldy chariot is drawn in slow stages from Pulchowk to Lagankhel. The showing of the ceremonial vest there to the king, dignitaries and the assembled people as well as to the Kumari of Patan, is celebrated with great enthusiasm not only by Patanites and Bungamati villagers, but also by others such as the Kirtipur Guthi members who pull Macchendra's rath (chariot) at the end of the festival. The honour of pulling the ropes, of pushing the chariot, is a coveted one. As the chariot is drawn, musicians play their instruments, devotees sing and struggle to touch the holy chariot, and the atmosphere is charged with gaiety and excitement, fervour and piety. The smooth progress of this great hulking vehicle through the narrow rutted streets of Patan is considered auspicious both for the people and the state. This smooth progress is particularly difficult to ensure when the chariot is drawn from Bungamati to Lagankhel in Patan once every twelve years. If mishap befalls this chariot it bodes ill for Nepal.

Left : A scene of the Adinath Jatra

The priests and the Guthis (social organisations) do all the work involved in organising the festivals. Termed an ubiquitous form of voluntary association (amongst Newars), Guthis "are common-interest groups with restricted recruitment ... Each Guthi has a senior member and an organising committee. Each Guthi requires an annual cash-subscription from its members, and an entrance fee for new members."[5] Such Guthis can be confined to a limited purpose; for instance, co-operation in funerals as in the case of Sana Guthis. Generally, they are self-help associations whose members get together for annual feasts. Members in need can borrow money at favourable rates from them, and the members get together to take part in the festivals which give such a unique tone and flavour to their lives. As another writer remarks, "the assimilation of such a system into the social and cultural attitudes and practices of a community is possible only in the context of an ancient and mature civilization."[6] In addition, of course, wealthy Guthis can hold large amounts of land and property which can be used for the purposes of the Guthi. These Guthis maintain musicians and dancers, they pass on, through their associations, the artistic skill required for building and maintaining monuments, they finance, through their rent, part of the cost of festivals, and they organise the participation and roles of different groups in the running of the festivals.

A festival of Bhatgaon, the Bisket Jatra, has a legend that echoes the early part of the Theseus myth. This tells the tale of the only daughter of a Bhatgaon king, whose exquisite beauty was matched only by her avid passion. Unfortunately, whoever slept with the princess was found dead the next morning. Her father decreed this fatal sensual duty by turns upon the males of every household. A foreign prince separated from his hunting party came to spend the night in a household on which the duty had devolved. He took the place of the son, and after satiating himself, rose from the bed when she fell asleep, drew his scimitar, and withdrew into a corner to watch and struggle with his doom. His suspense was

Right : A little girl made up for Dassain
Overleaf : Bhairav's mask on his chariot, anointed with sacrificial blood for Bisket Jatra

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Right : A little girl made up for Dassain

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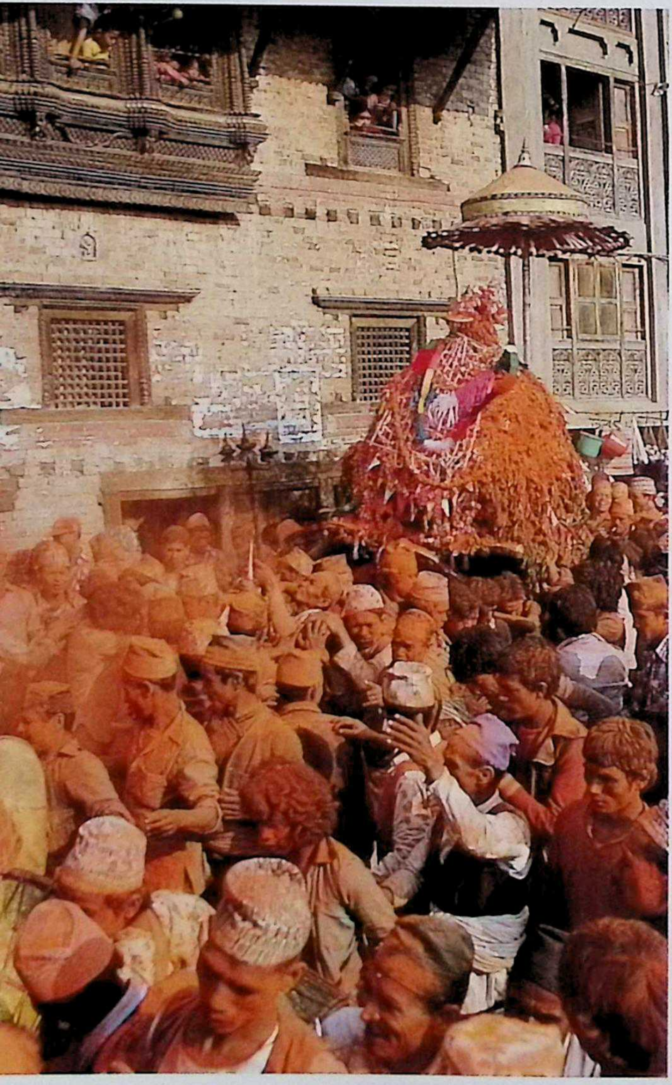
broken when in the filtering moonlight he saw two threads emerge from the princess's beautiful nostrils and, past the sensual lips, turn into serpents seeking their prey in the tired man. The virile prince cut the serpents into pieces and removing the dead snakes went back to his princess. The next day, the mutilated serpents were hung from a pole and the town instituted a festival in which the Goddess Bhadrakali, seated in a chariot, could celebrate along with the populace, the death of the snakes and the final discovery of a prince whose ardour matched and mastered that of the beautiful but insatiable princess.

The present-day Bisket celebrations are renowned for their rowdiness. The wooden chariot, adorned with the blood of oblations and sacrifices, drawn by incensed and drunken crowds, careens through the narrow, sloping lanes with ropes at the back to break its run down the slopes; those pulling it from the front run for their lives as the chariot teeters down badly-paved paths. When the Bhairav chariot comes to the main open square, the dwellers in the upper part of the city struggle with the inhabitants below in a passionate tug-of-war which often turns into a mob-battle. The police dread this festival, regarding it as an annual security hazard, but the people seem to enter into the spirit of things. The tug-of-war almost certainly institutionalises a limitation of the conflict between two parts of the town at the time of feudal furor. Another important part of the festival is the planting of the pole in a hole made of cemented rocks on the day preceding New Year. Ropes, pulleys and a disorganised and inebriated mob try to erect this tall tree – symbolizing, no doubt, the success of the ardent prince over the insatiable princess. Even today, the event continues to prove fatal as the eighty-foot tree, shorn of its branches, comes crashing down in successive attempts. Failure to erect the pole finally is considered inauspicious for the whole year. So much effort, enthusiasm and choler are generated in the process. On the afternoon of the New Year, two teams pull on either side while the



Left : Avir (coloured dust) thrown at the processionists at Thimi's Balkumari Jatra thousands gathered to watch this run hither and thither to escape the fall, till the tall lingam comes shattering to the ground symbolizing the death of the two serpents in the two long banners attached to it. This heralds the start of the New Year.

A more peaceful celebration of the New Year is held in Thimi, half-way between Kathmandu and Bhatgaon. Here, the people keep vigil, with lights and torches, around the Balkumari (the child-goddess) temple on New Year's night. The four combined torches consecrated to the goddess have to be lit without interruption throughout the night. Some devotees lie immobile at the temple with oil lamps affixed on their bodies and foreheads with cow-dung, as a special feat of piety. The heat generated by all these lights is thought to drive out winter and usher in spring.

The next day, there is a great procession in which all the 14 wards of the township carry their temple-shaped palanquins through the city festooned with flowers and watchers. Turning umbrellas follow the gods in palanquins, gay crowds chant their way across the town, and groups of boys carrying masses of Avir (the ocher powder that symbolizes success) fling brilliant billows of the powder on the procession, the watchers and particularly on laughing young girls, whether on the streets or at the windows. The whole of Thimi turns vermillion that day. This procession is followed by the usual animal sacrifices. Nearby in Bode, during the festival of Mahalaxmi, a man who has purified himself over the last four days has his tongue bored with a long metal spike by the pujari and parades his painful piety around the town. So various and idiosyncratic are the festivals of the Kathmandu Valley that in one, the Chankdeo festival, the ritual castigation of a deified personage for cohabiting with a low-caste girl is celebrated.[7] In this sense, Rudyard Kipling's famous verse continues to apply :

Still the world is wondrous large —
seven seas from marge to marge.
And it holds a vast of various kinds
of man and the wildest dreams of Kew
are the facts of Kathmandu...

This is a brief sample of the vast folio of festivals; they signify the variety of gods who are annually brought to life and form a part of the continuing and highly enjoyable social ritual. The culture of Kathmandu enjoys its unabated vigour through these festivals; it records them in the vivid lore of legend, thus making the archetypal gods both divine and demonic, intimate to the citizen, and enshrining it all in the matrix of the age-old Guthi.

Decay and Restoration

The kind of materials used in traditional Newari architecture, particularly its heavy reliance on wood and on mud to mortar bricks, has meant that the buildings seldom survived beyond four to five centuries. So that from Licchavi times right upto the Gorkha period, a constant process of building and rebuilding, based on the same traditional norms and formulae of pagodas, viharas (monasteries), stupas, shikaras, mathas, palaces and pattis, continues. The shila-lekhs or stone-inscriptions of each period, which glorify the kings or other patrons who commanded such constructions, bear clear testimony of this continuing process. Evidence of this process is to be found as late as the Rana period in the several copper-plate inscriptions of Maharaja Juddha Shumshere who presided over the major reconstruction works that had to be carried out after the great earthquake of 1934. By this time, the repairs did not necessarily stick to the old formulae. As Bannerjee points out, "The ancient styles have indeed been preserved ... more often by accident than by design. The awkward and outlandish domical roofs that we often see surmounted on the framework of a structure (temple), designed originally to be a multi-roofed temple, came in the course of repairs ... after the earthquake of 1934."[1] He cites, in particular, the Shiva temple at the centre of Rani Pokhari, where the renovated structure fails to capture the spirit of the original "built by Pratap Malla in 1669 obviously in the multi-roofed style ... (with) the grace of the serrated silhouette against the backdrop of the Himalayas and the reflection of the Devala-style temple in the crystal-clear waters of the tank under the canopy of a blue sky."[2] The chancy nature of restoration in the post-earthquake period was almost certainly due to the long decay and attrition of skills and craftsmanship for over a century-and-a-half in the preceding period. So that when a vast number of monuments had to be restored after the earthquake, they were restored where the original skill was available but rebuilt with the domes of Muslim or stucco style where such skills were not available. The objective of the post-earthquake rebuilding, like that of the Upatyaka Nirman Samiti in the fifties and sixties, was just to restore the functions – in this case, to do so as soon as possible, with whatever artisans were available. So, in the 20th century, the continuing process of restoration was distorted, and renovation itself began to threaten the legacy of the past.

Far more serious than this factor, was the general situation of decay in the monuments worn out by time. By the sixties, cars and heavy vehicular traffic were using lanes originally meant for people to walk or ride on; craft was dying; public or governmental interest in repair and restoration had ebbed over a long period; funds were not available. The natural decay with age was intensified by the advent of modernisation, pollution, etc. The picture can best be represented by quoting from an article by K.P. Malla, originally written for *The Rising Nepal* in 1967: "As we lose our ways in the old parts of the city, struggling through a maze of dark, slimy and narrow lanes, jammed with vehicular traffic of all sorts ... the incongruity is ... between the disdaining repose of art and the bewildering details of the surrounding material squalor. It is in this labyrinth that one realises that Kathmandu was never built, it just

Previous page: Ancient struts awaiting restoration, piled against the wall of the Patan Museum

Opposite page: A dilapidated stone spout with exquisite carvings in urgent need of restoration at Bolachen tole, Bhaktapur grew up like weeds .... The old city abounds in the deposits of time — groaning buildings with beautifully carved but rotting verandahs, temples and pagodas in disrepair, cracking door-frames with exquisite details, places of worship with obscene terracotta. It is art in ruins and disarray, the islands of symmetry in the thick of fuming slums and green gutters, the harmony in bronze and stone thick with pious scum that unnerves every outsider in Kathmandu ... amidst ... suffocating traffic and pedestrians, stubborn street vendors and obscure holes .... Suddenly there is an island of calm and order, repose and harmony — the work of an unknown artist or artists who betrayed their disdain everywhere in stone, wood and metal ... Each building or pagoda is a triumphant solution, details and perspective, parts and the whole ... (announcing) not only the artist's triumph over stone, metal and wood, but also his triumph over the chaos of teeming symbols and details. Today each classical Nepalese abode is merely an island disdaining its own environment, neither enriching nor enriched. In Kathmandu, the golden pagodas float upon the entrails of the fuming city like Noah's ark."

I have quoted this in detail not only because the situation has altered now and one needed a description from the sixties, but also because the writer strikes an authentic note of despair which reflects the putrefaction of monuments and the degradation of their environment.

Quite apart from the ravages of time, the opening up and modernisation of Nepal ushered in a pattern of metropolitan development that affected the environment of the heritage. As concrete blocks became fashionable and the rental value of the central area of the city rose, people began to dismantle buildings indiscriminately, destroying the harmony of the old Newar-style family homes, selling off wonderful struts and magnificent windows to replace them with concrete structures fit for shops, offices and restaurants, and other forms of high-rent-earning space. Due to the same reasons, a large number of tall buildings were built. These have begun to detract from the beauty of the skyline, that intricate and exquisite vista which greets the beholder if he looks from the towers of Hanuman Dhoka across Kathmandu to the Himalayas. The demand for cement has led to the construction of the Chobhar Cement Factory next to the lovely Jal Vinayak temple which leaves a haze of pollution over Chobhar gorge along the whole reach of the Bagmati towards Dhakshinkali. Gradually, the architectural character of Kathmandu was altering, with concrete boxes becoming the norm instead of the graceful brick-and-tile houses. The growth of the city and its spread into the countryside could also pose a long-term threat to the rural-urban balance that typifies Kathmandu. New and uncontrolled construction threatened the harmony, scale and perspective of even the most major monumental areas such as the Hanuman Dhoka, Patan and Bhatgaon Durbar Square. It was as if the gods of the Valley were saying, in the words of Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall :

Let my temples fall they are dark with age,
Let my idols break they have stood their day
On their deep hewn stones the primeval age
Has figured the spell that endures always:

My presence may vanish from river and grove
But I rule forever in death and love.

Thus the multifarious threats of both development and decay needed to be urgently addressed by the late sixties.

The return of the present King of Nepal, then the crown prince, after prolonged studies abroad, with his interest in the aesthetic heritage of Nepal, brought a renewal of royal patronage to restoration at this critical juncture. Although the first consultants from UNESCO had come to advise Nepal on the conservation of its heritage as early as 1963, and there were other missions, nothing came of it. The 1968 UNESCO mission established the connection between the preservation of monuments and their use for the promotion of cultural tourism for both cultural and economic development. This report had some influence on Nepalese tourism policy. The most important result of the then crown prince's interest in restoration was the initiation of the Hanuman Dhoka conservation project in 1972. The first demonstration in the field of restoration was that of the Pujari Math in Bhaktapur, which was undertaken by the Federal Republic of Germany as its gift on the occasion of the wedding of the crown prince. The Hanuman Dhoka project attracted donations through UNESCO from such varied sources as Japan, France, Italy and Britain, apart from contributions by the palace and HMG of Nepal, and by means of this, induced the interest of many countries and foundations in the heritage conservation process. Most appropriately, the restored Nasal Chowk was used in its full glory and splendour for the coronation of King Birendra. The restoration of the Pujari Math led to a multi-disciplined exercise in the restoration of a whole town area in Bhaktapur, again with German aid.

In a sense, the altered politico-economic situation in Nepal created the atmosphere for the revival of planned efforts to restore the monuments of the Valley. The nation was preoccupied with the struggle to establish the new mores of political stability in post-revolutionary Nepal in the fifties. In the sixties, political stability was attained but the need to lay the foundations of development engrossed the realm. In 1972, King Mahendra died after finishing this fundamental task. King Birendra, both because of his youth and his more liberal and catholic upbringing, was more suited to the complex and sophisticated pattern of evolution on which Nepal then embarked. Within seven years of ascending the throne, he took the bold decision of holding a referendum by adult franchise to let the Nepalese people decide whether they wished political evolution to take place through the framework of the partyless panchayat system, initiated by his father, or to change to a multi-party system. In this unusual referendum for the choice of a political system the people of Nepal decided in favour of the familiar panchayat system.

The King then amended the Constitution to change the prevailing indirect electoral system by instituting elections to the national legislature by direct adult franchise; he empowered the legislature to elect the prime minister, and broadened the franchise for other tiers of the panchyats. The house was opened to the public and the press given a tremendous measure of freedom.

These political initiatives were matched by substantial advances in the field of development. For instance, between 1973 and 1984, the installed generating capacity of electrical units more than tripled, the mileage of all-weather roads increased four-fold, the drinking water available to the population per day in litres was increased more than three times. The number of tourists coming to Nepal more than doubled, primary school enrollment increased six-fold, capital investment in the industrial field very nearly tripled; and in the period between 1973 and 1984, additional irrigation facilities were provided to around four times that achieved in the period between 1951 and 1973.[3] In this period, institutes of engineering, medicine, forestry and agriculture were all strengthened so that graduate-level schools in all four areas were established. New strategies for regional development and to meet the basic needs of backward rural areas were initiated. H.M's foreign policy initiatives made Nepal widely known, and the flow of foreign aid and loans increased enormously. In effect, the King created a broader framework of modernisation in which Nepal could move out of the constraint of narrow grooves of the earlier period and pay attention to the multifold aspects of transforming its backward society. He was conscious that the best of tradition had to be preserved, and this led, amongst other things, to the restoration of the cultural legacy, whether it be in Lumbini (the birthplace of Buddha, in the Terai), the Valley of Kathmandu or the Lama monasteries of the north.

This restoration began a new chapter in the preservation of the legendary past. Before restoration work started, there was scientific documentation of the buildings to be restored. The government undertook a detailed measured survey of the buildings, their height and proportion, analysis of the sectional elevation and exact measurements of the components. The buildings were analysed, at times using sophisticated and expensive techniques of photogrammetric survey, at times doing the detailed measuring and drawing of sections

Left: A Licchavi Avalokiteshwara at Chabahal, wantonly desecrated with paint by the meticulous work of experts and their assistants. A study of the history of the buildings and their relationship to the environs, making a detailed inventory of the carvings and other aesthetic elements, yielded a fuller picture of the objective of restoration. Then, the restorers made a structural survey of the buildings' condition. On the basis of this assiduous analysis, a plan was drawn up to rectify the structural faults and to repair or treat other parts as needed to restore them to their pristine glory. The principle was to make the structure sound and watertight, so as to preserve the whole and to prevent further deterioration and damage... to retain as much of the original work as possible. Where repairs and replacements were made, they were done in such a way that they 'could be recognised as such by future archaeologists', so that while they fitted in with the old parts, they were not deliberately and artificially antiquated, laboured reproductions.[4]

Restoration experts were careful to use as much of local material as possible. They had to establish the cause of decay or damage, whether due to earthquakes, dry or wet rot, wood-boring insects, white ants or whatever. They then set out to attack the root causes and destroy them. They used an array of chemical treatment techniques, of jointing wood, of using reinforced glues, of ferro-concreting in badly displaced structures, then facing them with old bricks, of cleaning wood and stone by the most careful techniques. The structures were carefully dismantled, components numbered and reassembled like some gigantic jig-saw puzzle. In some cases, as that of the Kirtipur Tower in Hanuman Dhoka, 80 per cent of the timber had to be replaced; yet the restoration is a virtually perfect replica. In other cases, like that of the Lalitpur Tower, which leaned after the 1934 earthquake like the Tower of Pisa, 90 per cent of the original structure was replaced after careful referencing. In this case, the cleaned pieces revealed a previous system of Newari numbering of the parts. The process of restoration, so fascinating in its intricacy, led to exciting discoveries at times. In the Masan Chowk, for instance, the beautiful windows in the north-west corner, when cleaned were found to be composed of several beautifully carved pieces of ivory and bone. In this manner, the experts who have worked in Bhaktapur and the Hanuman Dhoka have in their labour of love transferred a new science of renovation, an intricate and valuable technique, to their Nepali counterparts.

Subsequently, with the help of the UN, UNESCO, Austria and the J.D. Rockefeller-III Fund, a protective inventory of the Kathmandu Valley for the preservation of environment and heritage was published in 1975. For the first time, this vital work made a comprehensive list of monuments, as well as historic idols, sculptures, etc., in and around the monuments. In 1975, UNESCO sent a team to prepare a master plan for the conservation of the cultural heritage in the Valley. The plan's objective was to ensure that people around the monuments enjoy satisfactory living conditions while the environment is maintained and that the sites and monuments are developed to encourage tourism as well as benefit the local people. In a sense, it tried to generalise what the German team had tried to do in the north-west section of Bhaktapur. This master plan was handed over to Nepal in 1977.

It was in this 1977-1979 period that I took charge of the Ministry of Education, whose Department of Archaeology was the main vehicle for restoration. The close collaboration with UNESCO led to a visit to Nepal by the Director General, M'bow, and the understanding we achieved then provided the basis for the inclusion of the monuments of the Valley of Kathmandu in the World Heritage list as "a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of the creative genius...(which has) exerted great influence over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world." (This is the criterion for inclusion in the Heritage list.) At Nepal's urging, the delegation I led to the Twentieth General Assembly of UNESCO in 1978 succeeded in persuading the General Assembly to pass a resolution placing the restoration efforts in the Kathmandu Valley on par with the great restoration work under way in such places as Borobudur, the Pyramids and the Acropolis. The resolution called upon member states to assist in the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of Kathmandu by such means as bilateral assistance and invited the Director General to intensify his efforts to mobilise and organise international co-operation to this end. At the same UNESCO session, I had the privilege, along with the Director General of UNESCO, M'bow, of launching an appeal to step up the mobilisation of funds for this project not only from governments, foundations and agencies, but also from private, social and cultural institutions. In 1982, as a follow-up to these important developments, UNESCO published a document entitled *Kathmandu Valley: Nepalese Historic Monuments in Need of Conservation*. This lists the sites requiring preservation and provides a brief description of each site and cost-estimates of their restoration. In this way, a shopping-list of 29 restoration projects, including around 100 monuments and sites, is provided. This is clearly a most effective instrument for soliciting aid from various donor organisations.[5]

The last few years have seen a number of other restoration projects such as the Gokarneshwar temple complex (near Baudha) funded by the International Fund for Monuments, U.S.A., or the Brahamayani temple at Panauti financed by the CNRS, France. At the same time, HMG of Nepal has stepped up its efforts in this direction. As the Nepalese government has to provide for intensive restoration, from the gumbas (the Lama monasteries) of the north to the temples of the hills and Terai and to the development of Lumbini and Kapilvastu, the birthplace and hometown of Lord Buddha, its resources are stretched to breaking point.

The consciousness of the value of our aesthetic legacy is growing amongst our own people. The establishment of a Nepalese Heritage Society and its success in holding the Third International Heritage Conference in Kathmandu in 1983, which King Birendra of Nepal inaugurated, indicate that an important sector of society is now interested both in mobilising funds for this purpose and also in contributing to it. There are at least two instances of completely private effort. At the Dwarika's Hotel, in Battisputali, there is a virtual museum of Nepali wood-carvings collected painstakingly from rejected parts of reconstructed houses and ruins of monuments. Though they have yet to be assembled and dated, it represents a fantastic feat of private effort. In Thapathali, the late General Singha Shumshere Rana, who had gathered together the remnants of one of the temples that collapsed in the 1934 earthquake, has put them together to build a quaint, but gloriously ornamented private house full of old carvings. These augur well for the future.

The restoration effort has had an important by-product, which in turn has evolved a dynamic and healthy linkage with tourism. Restoration has regenerated a large group of skilled artisans who specialise in wood-carving, bronze, metal-work, etc. They also craft art goods which are readily available to tourists. The interesting point is that it is the tourist market which makes restoration skills lucrative by providing a secondary source of income. The emergence of a class of artisans skilled in these activities will also create a vested interest in the process of restoration. Thus, tourism has become a means of reinforcing traditional skills.

Sanday points out how difficult it was to find traditionally-skilled artisans when the Hanuman Dhoka Project began. He found a 'reliable and competent' group of 40 traditional wood-carvers. "As they work, these artisans seem to relive their traditional craft and their work becomes part of their religion. There appears to be a strict control of the type of work each man can perform, based upon experience and competence. The task of 'opening' or carving the eyes of an image of a god can be carried out by only three men from Bhaktapur. This honour is handed down from generation to generation and is passed onto the next man only after certain religious rites have been performed."[6] He also says that before the project these men only found enough work for one day a month. Thus the project revived a failing craft and improved its skills.

The rediscovery of the process of making a 'telia' brick — a flat rectangular brick more like a small flagstone than a brick — is interesting . The name 'telia' misled the project's volunteers, so they tried making bricks on a traditional brick field by a hit-or-miss method which only ended in the experimenters being pelleted with mud and oil. An old man, who, like

Right: The Sakyamuni Bhavishya Vyakarnamudra, at Rajarajeshwari Ghat 7 c. in a heart-rendingly neglected condition all the other onlookers, was highly amused by the antics of these funny foreigners and bureaucrats playing at brick-making, suddenly realised what they were up to and offered to show them how to do it. He brought his tools and started to work. A second old man chipped in to correct his work and the result of their dialectic was a 'telia' brick that withstood the tests perfectly. Thus, amidst fun and laughter they found their product and the traditional craftsmen (Awal or brickmakers) to produce it. Another skill on the verge of extinction was the process of laying sheet-metal roofs. This skill, which was at one time so much prized that for this very purpose Nepali artisans were called to Tibet, was fading from memory in the seventies as the high price of metal inhibited people from commissioning such roofs.

In the process of employing people with these skills in the restoration project, the project officials came to realise that the craftsmen learnt their skill by family tradition. All these artisans, whether carvers (Silpakars), metal-workers (Tamrakars), roofers (Awas), or stone-masons (Lohakamis), come from sub-castes of the Uray or Jyapu castes. As Sanday points out, "Throughout the development of the traditional architectural style in Kathmandu Valley.... there has been very little innovation... it is ... more correct to define the art and architecture... as folk art, a craft that is ... with no academic or aesthetic criticism levelled at the artistry produced.

"This... (does not) diminish in any way the intensity of the work... it is highly expressive of Nepal's culture and is the result of strong religious motivation and dedication of its creators."[7] This re-emphasises what we have earlier pointed out, that the highest level of craftsmanship required knowledge concerning iconography and the religious significance of decoration, i.e. religious texts were as important as the manual skills handed down. We hope that the future development of skills, catering more and more for the tourist market as a cottage industry, will keep up old tantric rites. For, the commercialisation of art discourages such practices, and the tastes of the buyer, even where refined, will be more oriented to the aesthetic than the religious aspects. As long as the old familiar Guthis or artists continue, there is still some hope for the survival of this aspect of traditional craftsmanship.

The needs of the restoration process, combined with the tourist market for handicrafts, has gradually revived a lot of inherited artistic skills. Bronze and copper figurines made by the lost-wax process, wood-carvings, fine filigree work, the Thankas (scroll-paintings) are all now available in quantity. If the bulk of the work lacks the fine intricacy of older workmanship, that is mostly due to the taste of tourists on their three-day stop. As fine a Thanka as of yore, as exquisite a bronze as in the days of Newar rule, with special gold-leafing, can be produced if a buyer has the patience to order, understand and wait for such work. This does not mean that every old scroll-painting or statuette from ancient times can still be reproduced; skills only in certain categories of paintings and some types of bronzes have survived. There are certainly some fine and exceptional artefacts in the old tradition made by present-day artists and artisans. Perhaps the best evidence of this is that some new art products are occasionally deliberately treated to give them an antique appearance, and such artificial antiques have fooled some experts of antique art. Only in two materials, stone and terracotta, have the old skills disappeared. In all the rest, the seventies and eighties have seen a new market-oriented renaissance.

To merely point out these few optimistic symptoms would be to gloss over reality. The growing price of real-estate in Kathmandu, above all in the heart of the city, has strengthened the motivation to build tall, narrow, nasty buildings which stick out like boxes of king-size cigarettes in deleterious contrast to the old Newar structures. The city continues to spread into the countryside. The Ring Road has helped spread this further. Along the many new roads or broadened highways leading out of the city, ribbon-type construction has emerged. The zoning ordinances are mostly honoured in their breach. The world market in antiques has put a premium on Nepali art so that the plunder of our aesthetic legacy has become, if anything, more organised. Electrification and telephone wires disturb the view of monuments, and except in Bhaktapur or around the Durbar Square in Kathmandu, roads around monuments have been blacktopped indiscriminately. To top it all, in improving the electric supply, transformers have been neatly fitted over Chaityas!

Above all, as the 'shopping-list' or shortlist shows, the need for restoration is critical, outstripping available resources. The functions of restoration are scattered in different ministries. The Bhaktapur project is under the Panchayat and Local Development Ministry and Lumbini Development Trust under Housing and Physical Planning; the Guthi Samsthan, under whose aegis 85 per cent of the monuments fall, is under Land Reform and Management Ministry; the repair of monasteries and temples in outlying areas is under the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development. Both the Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee and the three town municipal bodies have shown scant regard for the needs of monument-preservation. So the task of monument-preservation is nothing less than monumental.

To these problems the Master Plan

Right : Hanuman Dhoka being restored has presented a complex and well-considered solution. The Ancient Monument Preservation Act 1956, the Kathmandu Valley Town Development Act, and the Guthi Undertaking Act, etc, are all lacking in a comprehensive design for a specific purpose and are, anyway, ineffectively implemented. So the first priority is for a viable and practical but comprehensive Protection of Cultural Heritage Act. The master plan and its subsequent economic report have been practical in suggesting a phased application. It recommends a start with the Kathmandu Durbar Square and the Swayambhu area. It has equally wisely proposed the creation of revenue-earning sites so that the preserved areas get an income from tourists through entrance fees which can be exclusively spent on restoration. In this way, along with a programme for salvaging monuments, it has offered a means to repay any loans for such purposes. The necessary legal enactments and a determined implementation of this plan are going to come up against the vested interests of urban real-estate owners. The required investment in restoration and environment preservation is going to be at odds against the crying needs of poverty-oriented programmes and other priority investments in one of the least developed countries of the world.

In this light, it is probably correct to raise the question of whether the opportunity-cost of investment in restoration and environment-preservation is not too high. There is no easy answer to this. The social needs of the outlying and inaccessible regions of Nepal, where poverty and backwardness prevail, are great. Any decision to invest in restoration work is one that those at the helm of affairs must face with reluctance. Yet, even those who live in the remotest mountains of Nepal, who eke out a pittance at the bitter end of existence, are often equally persistent about the repair of their gumbas (Lama monasteries) or temples as they are about drinking water or irrigation projects or bridges and trails. Even for the poorest Nepali, religion cuts as deep as economic necessity. These testify to his expression of 'felt needs', not the imposed decisions of a central bureaucracy. This is all the more true of the Valley's inhabitants whether rich or poor. If the skeins of the living culture were to be broken, if the gods became strangers, if the Guthi system broke down, however better off Kathmandu became economically, the true social well-being of the inhabitants would be ineffably undermined. Fortunately, an investment in restoration is not purely of aesthetic value. It creates employment, revives old crafts and skills; it creates a new market. Tourism, restoration and cultural integrity, if well-planned and balanced, can enrich the local population. Though the rationale of this argument is 'not by bread alone', in corollary it can provide 'bread' for a broad-based class of artisans and thereby alleviate poverty.

There is also a fundamental question that every developing country must answer in its strategy of modernisation. This is a question which often gets neglected in the pulls and pushes of electoral politics, in the need to raise productivity, to industrialise the nation, to build dams, to distribute wealth and income. It is the vision of the kind of society that the nation wishes to create, the human values that it would wish to perpetuate in the prosperous future that it is aiming at. Certainly, it cannot be a simplistic pastoral idyll. Kathmandu, whose magnetic appeal drew hill-dwellers and created in this process the state of Nepal, was always an urban civilization. It is, that curious and delicate balance between city and countryside, between a sophisticated civilization and nature, that has always epitomised this Valley. Certainly, part of the answer lies in distributing investments and creating hubs of industrialisation in other parts of the country rather than conglomerating these to disturb the subtle harmony of Kathmandu. The balance can then be replicated in other parts, each with its defined periphery of radiation. Even more important than that is to realise the value of our living culture, of our inestimable legacy, so that our strategy for modernisation consciously aims at maintaining this socio-cultural heritage.

Here, both faith and conscious effort are required; the faith to hold to the essence of the old culture while exercising an eclectic choice of the best aspects of modernisation. In this way, while the plight of the poor, ordinary Nepalese is relieved, he will not be overwhelmed by an alien ideology or be left bereft of the faith that abounds in our green hills, nor regimented out of the spontaneous joy of the communal festivals, and, least of all, find himself atomised from the ties of family and Guthi that lend such warmth to his existence. While such a vision is not easy to spell out in the statistics of five-year plans, this is surely a vision that the conscious Nepali must try and frame. The modernisation of Nepal must cater for both body and soul.

It is into this grand design that efforts for the restoration of the Valley's monuments and the preservation of its environment must fit. Nepal has now both the techniques and the plan to carry out its task. It badly lacks the resources, being one of the least developed countries. The living ecology of Kathmandu's aesthetic legacy does not belong to Nepalis alone. With the revolution in transport technology and the growth of tourism, the artistic heritage of virtually every part of the globe has become accessible to the eager pilgrim. The cathedrals of Europe may be very different from Ajanta and Ellora, but the European traveller is as moved by the latter as a Hindu or Buddhist. Nor are such travellers rare any longer. From Kyoto to Florence, from the ruins of Lubaantun to the Potala, from the Notre Dame to the Taj Mahal, the same globe-trotter can share and marvel at this enormously rich and variegated tapestry of human expression. We are beginning to realise that the individual cultural heritage of each country forms a part of the universal legacy of mankind, and that the diminution or decay of any part impoverishes the whole. It is this broader consciousness that, beyond political ideologies, over and above the gulfs of religion and race, can provide a shared vision, a pride and reverence in the achievements of our past, that can be the common inheritance of all mankind. It is this aspiration towards a world community that provides the true motive for the conservation of our heritage.

The ravages of time, the side-effects of metropolitan development and the many other ills that threaten this exquisite and unique achievement of human civilization in Kathmandu, threaten a precious part of that great treasure that belongs to all humanity. So I appeal, in the words I used in 1978 at UNESCO, to all governments, foundations, private institutions and bodies: "Since time immemorial, beauty in distress has appealed to the chivalrous instincts of mankind. The beauty of Kathmandu is in distress, and deserves your chivalrous concern."

APPENDIX I

TOPICS		YEARS	
	1951	1973	1984
Roads			
Fair weather	366 km	1,630 km	2,232 km
All weather	10 km	874 km	2314 km
Electricity			
General Electric Power in MW	4.5	57	170.3
Water Supply			
Drinking Water Available per day in litres	14,511,600	60,964,000	219,928,000
No. of people served	281,430	743,430	1,824,000
Education			
Primary School Enrollment	8,505	301,439	1,747,857
Lower Middle School Enrollment	1,680	157,509	238,038
High School Enrollment	11	58,484	216,473
Number of Campuses			
Technical		16	36
Non-Technical	1	63	70
Tourism			
Number of rooms	NA	NA	6,819
Number of tourists	NA	89,838	176,634
Irrigation (Area in hectares due to government investment)			
Area	14,700 ha Before plan period	54,296 ha (From 1st plan to 1973)	191,608 ha (1973-1984)
Agriculture			
Area '000 ha	NA	1,227	1,334
Production '000 M. Ton	NA	2,416	2,745
Average Yield Rate Kg/ha	NA	1,969	2,057

Industry			
Capital Investment	NA	9,600,000 (Investment of 1974-1975)	255,600,000
Number of Industries	NA	70 (Private firms not included)	1,355
Production			
Jute goods (M. Ton)	NA	12,265	21,323
Sugar (M.Ton)	NA	11,926	17,496
Cigarettes (in lakh sticks)	NA	30,013	37,407
Matches (Gross)	NA	649	1,121
Liquor (excluding country liquor) (in Th litres)	NA	224	358
Soap (M. Ton)	NA	891	5,594
Shoes (Pairs)	NA	70,044	72,697
Leather (Th. pieces)	NA	623	3,709
Agricultural Tools (M. Ton)	NA	300	481
Tea (M.Ton)	NA	254	827
Stainless-steel utensils (M. Ton)	NA	156	439
Bricks & Tiles (Th. pieces)	NA	25,575	29,760
Beer (Th. litres)	NA	688	3,125
Cotton textiles (Th. metres)	NA	4,200	10,040
Cement (M. Ton)	NA	26,933	39,225
Biscuits (M.Ton)	NA	601	3,638
Plywood (Th. sq. ft.)	NA	607	4,116
Synthetic textiles (Th. metres)	NA	1,128 (Production of 1974-75)	3,591

Source:HMG/Nepal

APPENDIX II

The inventory of sites for restoration is taken from the book prepared by UNESCO: **KATHMANDU VALLEY – Nepalese historic monuments in need of preservation.** It is reproduced with the kind permission of UNESCO. The sites that have been already restored as well as a few others considered less important by the author have been omitted, while some of the original descriptions have been abridged.

The costs of repairs given were worked out in 1982 US dollars. An approximate adjustment of 5% increase per annum due to inflation would be appropriate.

A. KATHMANDU DURBAR SQUARE

A1. **Ashok Binayak:** (Single-tiered temple) Location: Maru Tol Deity: Ganesh Religion: Hindu/Buddhist Records: 1849 and 1850	Building Description A small but highly ornate single-roofed temple; although its records date back only to the middle of the nineteenth century, its history and foundation are considered to be very old. Proposed Repairs Minimal repairs consisting of cleaning metal-work and any necessary maintenance. Estimated Costs $ 7,000
A2. **Durga Temple:** (Two-tiered temple) Location: Maru Tol Deity: Mahishamardini. Religion: Shakta	Building Description This small two-roofed shrine in the traditional style, constructed against the wall of a modern concrete building, has an open sanctum supported by four pillars. Struts depicting Bhairab support both roofs. The image enshrined here is a seventeenth century sculpture of Mahishamardini. Proposed Repairs This structure is in a poor state of repair and requires considerable renovation. Estimated Costs $ 7,000
A3. **Shivaling:** (Two-tiered temple) Location: Maru Tol Deity: Shiva Religion: Shaiva	Building Description A beautifully proportioned, medium-sized traditional temple with a two-tiered roof of tiles. It is built on a three-step plinth, and is an important architectural feature in this group. Proposed Repairs The temple is in a reasonable state of repair. It needs general overhauling, cleaning and repair of carvings, reroofing, resetting of the plinth, etc. Estimated Costs $ 15,000

A4. Kastha Mandap: A/K-197
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: 1620-39
Renovated: 1966
Deity: Gura
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1334, 1485, 1742

Building Description

This large structure, the 'pavilion of wood' located in the centre of Maru Square, is one of the most important buildings in Nepal's history. Its original purpose was a community hall. The colonnaded structure supporting heavy roofs is on three storeys and is of symmetrical design. The beauty of the building derives mostly from its massiveness and simplicity. This pavilion of wood was made from the wood of a single tree.

Proposed Repairs

The structure underwent major restoration in the late 1960s and is therefore mostly sound. However, the roof needs a special overhaul to prevent grass growths and the timbers need chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 45,000

A5. Mahadev: B/K-198
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: Fifteenth century
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Shivalinga
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

This is a typical Shikhara temple with a shallow portico supported by four pillars. The structure is of brick and terracotta with a later stucco facing. The entrance has a sculptured tympanum of Shiva. Above the sanctum is a tall Shikhara with a finial. The temple was renovated in 1934.

Proposed Repairs

This structure in on the point of collapse and needs immediate structural repair; otherwise it will be lost. Although it is not in itself a building of great importance, its loss would certainly be detrimental to the environment.

Estimated Costs
$ 16,000

A6. Silyan Sata: B/K-199
(Residential House)
Location: Maru Tol
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Harikrishna
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: 1929

Building Description

This unusual house is a three-storeyed domestic building with balconies at first- and second-floor levels. On the upper balcony there are four unusual leaping griffins at each corner, added in about 1929. Inside the shrine there is a small temple of Harikrishna and an open hall used primarily for singing bhajans.

Proposed Repairs

The main structure appears reasonably sound but the ground floor needs some unification. Shops, roof and balconies need a fairly extensive overhaul and reshaping.

Estimated Costs
$ 45,000

A7. Dhansa: A/K-200
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: 1673
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Narasinha
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: Inscriptions of 1673

Building Description

This large rectangular building situated on the eastern side of the Maru Tol, is another structure of unique quality and design. It is a multi-use building, being partly temple dedicated to Narasinha, an incarnation of Vishnu, and partly a Guthi house for those responsible for organizing the Narasinha dance initiated by Pratap Malla. The ground floor is occupied by a colourful fruit store.

The building dates from 1673 and was built during the reign of, and initiated by, King Pratap Malla. The struts and windows are finely carved, and the supported roofs produce an interesting silhouette. The shrine contains a number of seventh-century sculptures.

Proposed Repairs

This is one of the most important and key buildings in the Kastha Mandap group and deserves a very careful survey of both structure and use prior to a major renovation programme. Its present condition is very bad; it is perhaps one of the most dilapidated buildings in the whole Durbar Square. It will certainly prove to be one of the most interesting studies and renovations in this group.

Estimated Costs
$ 45,000

A8. Kumari Bahal:
A/K-204, A/K-205
(Bahal courtyard)
Location: Basantapur
Deity: Five Buddhas
Religion: Buddhist

Building Description

This Bahal is the dwelling place of Kumari, the Living Goddess. This monastic building whose exterior is profusely decorated with extremely beautiful carved windows and struts which are of the finest of their kind to be found in the Durbar Square, is also important for its socio-religious significance. Directly above the shrine on the second floor is a room containing eighteenth-century wall paintings which is used as Kumari's shrine. It must have been built during the height of the Malla period.

Proposed Repairs

Structurally this building appears to be well maintained. However, on the exterior the facade is plastered over, concealing the fine Malla brickwork, and the carvings are encrusted with layers of paint and dirt. Both brickwork and carvings need careful cleaning. The interior elevations to the courtyard have also been painted and will require careful cleaning. The roofs will need overhauling, special treatment and retiling.

Estimated Costs
$ 48,000

A9. Nava Jogini: B/K-186
(Two-storeyed Satal style)
Location: Maru Tol
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

The style of this single-roofed shrine is unusual. It is built on a three-tiered brick and stone plinth. Its facade is almost completely taken up with beautifully carved windows, doorways and toranas.

Proposed Repairs

This building has recently undergone structural repair under Nepalese government/UNESCO supervision. The only work required is general maintenance and repair of the defective brickwork around the base of the temple. The plinths and dance platform will also require some attention.

Estimated Costs
$ 17,000

A10. Narayan: B/K-189
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Renovated: 1970
Deity: Narayan
Religion: Vaishnava

Building Description

This temple is a large three-storeyed structure located in a prominent place adjacent to Nava Jogini. It is built on a four-tiered plinth. The temple is used for worship and maintained by a private Guthi group of Joshis who live nearby.

Proposed Repairs

The temple was repaired in 1970 and structurally appears to be in reasonable condition. It is recommended that the building be overhauled, plaster and paint cleaned from the fabric and the roofs given proper treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 25,000

A11. Joshi Agan: B/K-190
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Deity: A mystic
Religion: Hindu Tantric

Building Description

This is a private temple belonging to the Joshis, a Hindu Newar family, and is used for worship only by the family. The temple is closely sandwiched between residential structures. The wood carvings on the doorway, windows, screened balconies and struts are of fine quality and make it an important element of the streetscape.

Proposed Repairs

As this temple is in private ownership, it is hoped that the family will provide an example by co-operating with the project for its proper repair. The work required is mostly maintenance, cleaning, overhauling and proper treatment of the roofs.

Estimated Costs
$ 17,000

A12. Manju Deaal: B/K-191
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: 1692
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva
Records: Inscription of 1962

Building Description

This temple, located in Kathmandu Square, is one of the most impressive of the multitiered style. Set on nine diminishing brick plinths, it dominates the skyline of the square. The carved timber doorways, pillars, windows and struts are all of good quality. Riddhi Lakshmi, the Queen Mother of Bhupatindra Malla, commissioned it in the late seventeenth century.

Proposed Repairs

Minimal repairs were done on this building in 1974, but it is in need of a general overhaul, removal of plasterwork, and cleaning and treatment of wood carvings.

Estimated Costs
$ 42,000

A13. Garuda Narayan: B/K-192
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: Sixteenth Century
Religion: Vaishnava

Building Description

This small structure is a unique and very important building with its two layers of heavy roofs and balconied appearance. It contains a wealth of interesting carvings and although its foundation date is unknown, it was probably built in the sixteenth century.

Proposed Repairs

Over the years this building has been much altered, and today it has a multiplicity of uses. Before any work can be recommended, a detailed survey will be necessary, which will make it possible to draw up a major renovation and rehabilitation programme.

Estimated Costs
$ 33,000

A14. Bimaleswar Mahadev: C/K-201
(Domed shrine)
Location: Maru Tol
Deities: Vimaleswar, Shivalinga
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1693

Building Description

This small and rather insignificant temple hidden beneath the large Narayan Temple is important because it is one of only two stone structures in the Kathmandu Durbar Square. It was built in the seventeenth century.

Proposed Repairs

The brick and stone plinth needs resetting and repairing; the stonework, which is being dislodged by vegetation growth, needs dismantling, chemical treatment and removal of the growths; the stonework should be cleaned and properly reset.

Estimated Costs
$ 8,000

A15. Narayan: B/K-202
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Constructed: 1690
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Vishnu
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: Inscription of 1690

Building Description

This temple dating from the late seventeenth century was badly damaged in the 1935 earthquake. The only original part remaining is the high multi-stepped plinth. The temple was reconstructed using earlier material and the original fine struts depicting the incarnations of Vishnu are still intact. Behind the temple, a large kneeling image of Garuda is a rare sculptural achievement for the late Malla period.

Proposed Repairs

This temple underwent a major repair in 1934, but owing to its size and mass much of the repair work was poorly carried out. It is anticipated that, along with removal of plasterwork and cleaning of carvings, much of the structural repair will need redoing.

Estimated Costs

$ 33,000

A17. Mahadev:
(Domed temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Eighteenth Century
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Chaturmukhalinga
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1746 and 1852

Building Description

This is the largest stone temple in the Kathmandu Durbar. It stands on a three-level stone base. It was built in the mid-eighteenth century.

Proposed Repairs

The chief repair work will be the cleaning and resetting of the plinth and the general cleaning and overhauling of the stonework of the temple.

Estimated Costs

$ 40,000

A18. Chasin Dega: B/K-181
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1649
Renovated: 1967
Deities: Krishna, Rukmini, Satyabhama
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: Inscription of 1649

Building Description

The temple of Bansagopal (dedicated to the flute-playing Krishna) was built in 1649 by Pratap Malla. This unusual octagonal temple is a plain three-tiered structure, reconstructed using parts of the original.

Proposed Repairs

As it is an important part of the streetscape and environment, this temple should be maintained. The roof form needs structural repair, the roof covering needs treatment and the carvings and brickwork need cleaning of paint.

Estimated Costs

$ 40,000

A21. Tarini Devi Mandir:
(Single-storey temple)
Location: Makhan Tol
Deity: Bhagwati
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

This temple, located to the north of the big Taleju Temple of Hanuman Dhoka, is a long, rectangular edifice with a set of three carved doorways. The structure and materials are traditional and there are some fine carvings on the supporting roof struts and pediments to the doorways. During the ninth day of Dassain, the sword of the goddess is taken out. According to popular belief, the goddess is older than Taleju, and she had to be appeased before Mahendra Malla could complete the Taleju Temple unhindered.

Proposed Repairs

This temple has recently undergone repair and is in reasonable condition. The carvings will need cleaning and repair and the roof covering should be replaced after proper chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 26,000

A23. Mahadev: C/K-155
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

This small temple, one of a pair flanking the northern entrance to Taleju, is located in the shade of a huge tree. The two-tiered brick structure with tiled roofs is set on a shallow brick base with nicely carved door and struts depicting the Matrikas.

Proposed Repairs

As one of a pair, this temple is important to the environment. It requires general overhauling, cleaning and reroofing.

stimated Costs
$ 9,000.

A24. Mahadev: C/K-156
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

This small two-tiered temple is the second of a pair flanking the northern entrance to Taleju.

Proposed Repairs

Same as for No. A 23. Mahadev C/K-155

Estimated Costs
$ 9,000

A25. Jagannath: B/K-174
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: First half of Seventeenth Century
Renovated: 1938 and 1968
Deity: Vishnu
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: 1933 and 1654

Building Description

The temple, which is located just outside the main palace gate at Hanuman Dhoka, is considered to be one of the best examples in this style. The broad square sanctum base has threefold doorway openings on all four sides. The intricately carved struts supporting the two roofs display figures from the Hindu pantheon: at their base are some good samples of erotica. The carving on the doors and windows is also of good quality. The brickwork, beneath many layers of paint, is the traditional Telia brick. At each corner of the upper podium are small two-tiered shrines of similar design. On the eastern face of the pedestal there is an inscription of Pratap Malla in praise of the goddess Bhawani written in fourteen different scripts. The temple was built during the reign of King Lakshminarasinha Malla.

Proposed Repairs

This is a temple of great importance needing careful cleaning, repair and conservation. Over the years it has collected several layers of paint and dirt, marring its architectural beauty. A major repair programme will be necessary. It is likely that some structural consolidation and repair will be required for the roofs. The roof coverings as well as the carvings will require proper chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 46,000

A26. Gopinath: B/K-175
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Deity: Gopinath
Religion: Vaishnava

Building Description

This temple, standing upon a raised brick base, is adjacent to the Jagannath Temple. It is of traditional design and has three tiers of roof crowned with a Gajur. The sanctum is surrounded by a carved wooden colonnade and carved wooden struts support the lower roofs. Although its date is uncertain, it was probably built in the seventeenth century. Its principal festival usually occurs in Krishnashtami.

Proposed Repairs

As part of the Jagannath group, this temple is an important element in the environment. It appears generally to be in reasonable condition but requires maintenance and cleaning. It is advisable for the roof covering to be relaid and treated; the brick base will also require some attention.

Estimated Costs
$ 36,000

A27. Mahadev: B/K-176
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Eighteenth Century
Renovated: 1933
Deity: Chaturmukhalinga Shiva
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1746 and 1852

Building Description

This is a two-tiered temple of traditional construction built on a square base with an added structure around the central sanctuary. The upper balconied roof is of unique form, totally open and of unusual shape. The roofs are supported by simple carvings. The temple was founded in about 1746.

Proposed Repairs

This temple underwent repairs and restoration fairly recently and the former shape of the upper structure was totally changed. Fortunately, there are photographic records, and it is suggested that the upper roof be restored to its original form. The temple otherwise needs general maintenance, cleaning and chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs

$ 26,000

A29. Pancha Mukhi Hanuman: B/K-162
(Five-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Hanuman
Religion: Hindu

Building Description

This unusual temple is built off the third floor of the southern wing of the main Mohan Chok at the north-eastern corner of Nasal Chok. The structure consists of five diminishing circular roofs supported by finely carved roof struts. The brickwork has been plastered over. The shrine contains a much-feared image of the five-faced Hanuman in its Tantric form, famous for curing illnesses. As a relic of the Malla dynasty, this temple is still secretly used for worship by the descendant of the same royal priest's family, an Achaju.

Proposed Repairs

Owing to its unusual circular construction, this structure is in a very poor state of repair. The roof construction is faulty, not having sufficient pitch, and as a result it is not watertight. The timber has rotted and collapsed in several places. The tiled roof covering is also in a very poor state of repair. It will be necessary to dismantle, clean, repair, and reassemble the whole structure carefully and to treat all elements with the appropriate chemicals.

Estimated Costs

$ 32,000

A30. Aagan Mandir: B/K-170
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Renovated: 1967
Deity: Agam deity
Religion: Tantric/Shakta
Records: 1653

Building Description
This temple in the traditional style is built on the second floor of the Mohan Chok palace building immediately over the statue of Hanuman at the main entrance to Nasal Chok. Although the palace building is a modern structure of Jung Bahadur's time, many of its features and shrines are of the Malla period. The details of this temple are of fine quality. All three roof levels have carved roof struts, depicting Shiva. The finial or Gajur is a miniature temple in the Shikhara style. The deity of this temple was the family god of the Malla kings and was worshipped only by them. This is why the temple was located on the second floor of the palace, with restricted access from inside.

Proposed Repairs
The structure appears generally sound. General maintenance will be necessary as well as the cleaning of carvings and re-roofing. The Gajur should be carefully checked, repaired and cleaned. This renovation will be carried out along with the Mohan Chok programme (A 31).

Estimated Costs
$ 32,000

A31. Mohan Chok: A/K-172
(Residential courtyard)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1649
Deities: Scores of Hindu divinities
Religion: Hindu

Building Description
This royal courtyard is located immediatelybehind the small audience hall with the modernized facade to the north of Nasal Chok. Unfortunately, most of the original structure has been defaced by nineteenth century reconstruction. However, much of the original form and detail still survive beneath. The Chok is built in the Chowath style forming a square quadrangle with towers at each corner. It is three storeys high with a fine balconied window on the eastern wall. The most important feature in the centre of the courtyard, with images of Brahmanical deities, is a finely gilded water spout set in a beautifully carved sunken bathing area: it was also the place where the king was laid to die.

Proposed Repairs
Like the Man Mohan Chok, this courtyard has also undergone repairs, but because entry is restricted the fabric is in poor condition. It is hoped to combine these two courtyards and to carry out a major renovation programme.

Estimated Costs
$ 110,000

A32. Man Mohan Chok: A/K-171
(Courtyard)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1648
Renovated: 1933
Deity: Mohan Kali
Religion: Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava
Records: 1648 and 1650

Building Description

The Man Mohan Chok, one of the many courtyards in the royal palace at Hanuman Dhoka, is located to the north of the Mohan Chok. It was built by Pratap Malla in 1648 and used for his private residence. During the nineteenth century, a modern facade was added and again renovated in 1933. It now entirely covers the original. The courtyard within has been altered very little, the additions being more like a veneer over the main structure.

Proposed Repairs

This courtyard has undergone renovation and maintenance over the years but, as entry is restricted, the general condition of the fabric has been sadly neglected. It is hoped that, together with the Mohan Chok, a major renovation programme may be undertaken and that these two historical courtyards will be opened up for visitors to see the important buildings and sculptures

Estimated Costs
$ 143,000

A33. Taleju Bhawani: A/K-157
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1576
Renovated: 1671 and 1969
Deity: Taleju
Religion: Tantric/Shakta
Records: Inscriptions of 1642, 1664 and 1671

Building Description

This temple is located at the northern end of the Hanuman Dhoka palace. Built upon a series of brick pedestals, it rises majestically above the town. On the brick pedestals are many small traditional style shrines containing the Panchayana gods and the guardians of the eight directions (Ashtadikpalas). Taleju is one of the finest examples of its style. The carved door frames, the metal torana, the array of figure struts depicting Kali, Bhawani, and the Matrika goddesses, the gilt copper roof with its decorative small bells and sparkling Gajuras, are all of excellent quality.

Taleju was adopted as the tutelary divinity by the Malla kings of Nepal. According to legend, King Harisimhadeva of Tirhut first brought this goddess to Nepal. The temple is used for worship every eighth day of the fortnight in the lunar calendar. But the main time for special worship is during the two Dasains, when many buffaloes are sacrificed.

Proposed Repairs

Access to this temple is very limited, therefore assessing its condition is not easy. Owing to lack of maintenance over several years the structure has deteriorated badly; its present condition is extremely poor. Many of the beautiful works of art are in advanced stage of decay, the structure is failing and the roofs are leaking. A detailed survey of this temple is required and it is likely that a major renovation and repair programme will have to be undertaken if the temple is to be saved.

Estimated Costs
$ 190,000

A34. Mul Chok: A/K-161
(Temple courtyard)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1564
Renovated: 1968 and 1972
Deity: Taleju
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

Mul Chok is the most important courtyard in the Hanuman Dhoka Palace. It is located on the eastern side of Nasal Chok. The low, single-storey structure, possibly the earliest building in the complex, is of uniform height on all four sides, with a tiled roof. The courtyard itself is paved with bricks. On the interior elevation of the courtyard there are some beautiful carvings. These include the doorway and its torana, together with the smaller windows; and the roof struts which depict the various forms of the eighteen-armed Mahishamardini. Flanking the entrance to the shrine on the south side are the two figures of Ganga and Yamuna. The main courtyard is consecrated to Taleju, who resides in the temple closeby, and was the tutelary divinity of the Malla rulers and later of the Shah rulers. The courtyard is only open to Hindus, once a year on the ninth day of Dassain, when hundreds of buffaloes and goats are sacrificed to Taleju.

Proposed Repairs

This building has recently undergone renovation and its structure should be in reasonable condition. Nonetheless, because of its importance, historically and architecturally, it should be properly surveyed and a careful repairing, cleaning and maintenance programme should be undertaken, together with the necessary chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs

$ 126,000

A35. Budhanilkantha Narayan: C/K-158
(Image in a pond)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Sixteenth century
Deity: Jalashayana Narayan
Religion: Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava

Building Description

This beautiful image of Vishnu lying asleep on a bed of snakes is located in the middle of a square tank at Hanuman Dhoka and is of special importance to the royal family.

Proposed Repairs

At present the image is under water as a result of the change in the water table. The tank's surround is crumbling through lack of maintenance. The second pond, Nag Pokhari, is also overgrown and dry. It is proposed that a pumping system be arranged to lower the water level in the Mani tank and fill the Nag Pokhari. It is hoped that this area will be opened up for tourists, since it could become a very fine and peaceful retreat in the centre of Kathmandu.

Estimated Costs

$ 55,000

A36. Mahadev: C/K-159
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: Seventeenth century
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Chaturmukhalinga
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

This small two-storey temple is built into a wall between two tanks. A porch structure marks the entrance to the sanctum. The supporting pillars are carved with Shaivite deities. It is a simple and plain structure supporting a tiled roof.

Proposed Repairs

Simple repairs have recently been undertaken, but a major renovation of this small structure should be carried out. The roof covering of tiles should be chemically treated and laid to a correct fall.

Estimated Costs

$ 26,000

A37. Degu Tale Mandir: A/K-179
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Deity: Tantric goddess
Religion: Tantric
Records: Writings of 1670

Building Description

This temple is considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of its style. It is built off the second storey of the former palace complex, now refaced, and it dominates the view of Palace Square. The different components of the temple are well-balanced and the handsomely carved wooden struts are very complex in form. The eaves of the gilt-copper roof are lined with small bells. The enshrined deity is a mystic goddess of tantric origin and was a family divinity of the Malla kings.

Proposed Repairs

The temple is fairly inaccessible, and maintenance has been limited. Although its main structure appears sound, its fabric has suffered from leakage of rainwater, damaging many of the carvings. A detailed survey needs to be undertaken followed by a major repair and renovation programme.

Estimated Costs

$ 100,000

A38. Sweta Bhairab: B/K-180
(Brick temple/shrine)
Location: Hanuman Dhoka
Constructed: 1795
Deity: Sweta Bhairab
Religion: Buddhist, Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava
Records: 1795

Building Description

This unusual brick-and-plaster shrine located in Hanuman Square contains a large mask of Bhairab enclosed by a group of intricately carved grilles. It was built by King Sri Rana Bahadur Shah.

Proposed Repairs

The structure has recently undergone repairs and is therefore generally sound. It is proposed that the carved windows and grilles be repaired, cleaned and chemically treated.

Estimated Costs

$ 9,000

A39. Bhagvati: A/K-187 and the Masan Chok
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Maru Tol
Renovated: 1756 and 1897
Deity: Durga
Religion: Shakta
Records: Writings of 1756 and 1897

Building Description

This Bhagvati shrine is located on an upper floor within the Masan Chok, one of the many courtyards making up the Hanuman Dhoka Palace complex. The temple is well-proportioned, with some fine carvings. It houses the goddess Bhagvati who is said to have been brought from Nuwakot by Prithivinarayan Shah.

Proposed Repairs

The Masan Chok and part of this temple underwent a major renovation programme a few years ago. However, the full extent of this wing was not completed nor was the work on the temple. The renovation programme needs to be extended and general maintenance should include the courtyard.

Estimated Costs

$ 12,000

Cleaning up Kathmandu Durbar Square

Funds are needed for the general cleaning up, removal of rubbish, repaving, provision of storm drainage, and cleaning and repair of small shrines that fall within the Monument Zone but are not listed in the official inventory.

Estimated Costs

$ 149,000

B. PATAN DURBAR SQUARE

B1. Krishna Mandir: A/P-134
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1637
Deities: Krishna, Radha,Satyabhama
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: 1637

Building Description

This is perhaps the finest stone structure to be found in the Kathmandu Valley. It is basically in the Shikhara style, with elements of other styles. The temple is built on a raised stepped platform, with a columned arcade circumambulating the ground floor. The first and second storeys consist of groups of shrine-like pavilions from which the slender Shikhara tower emerges. The main shrine is located at first-floor level.The temple, reflecting something of the local architectural styles, is reminiscent of the Moghul style from India. It took about six-and-a-half years to build and was sponsored by Siddhi Narasingha Malla; the main divinity was installed in 1637.

Proposed Repairs

This temple, which is undoubtedly one of the finest monuments in all Nepal, needs specialised attention. Unfortunately, the priest is resident on the first floor and as a result, smoke and water from cooking has not only discoloured but damaged the stonework. A detailed survey needs to be carried out, followed by careful cleaning, repair and treatment. It is hoped that, without interfering with his religious responsibilites, the priest may be given alternative living quarters close by.

Estimated Costs

$ 60,000

B2. Bishwa Nath Mandir: A/P-135
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1626
Deities: Visvanath, Shivalinga
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1626

Building Description

This two-tiered brick temple with tiled roofs is built on a square base of brick with finely carved stone thresholds. It was constructed during the reign of King Siddhi Narasingha Malla. The sanctum is enclosed by an arcaded passage; over each set of pillars is a beautifully carved torana or pediment with images of Shiva. The equally fine roof struts have images of Surya, Ganesh, Annapurna, Shiva and Parvati.

Proposed Repairs

The temple recently underwent structural repair. However, the carvings need cleaning, repair and treatment. The roofs need re-laying after chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs

$ 46,000

B3. Manga Hiti: A/P-136
(Water-conduit)
Location: Durbar Square
Renovated: 1968
Deity: Lakshmi Narayan
Religion: Hindu

Building Description

The construction of this water-conduit must have been quite an undertaking because of its size and depth. The spouts are in the form of three crocodile heads which are beautifully carved out of stone. This is perhaps the oldest physical structure in the Durbar Square, and was probably excavated in the tenth century during the Licchavi period.

Proposed Repairs

There is some structural work necessary to stabilize the southern wall. This work will be carried out in association with the repairs and consolidation of the north wing of the Keshab Narayan Chok. General maintenance, such as the resetting and repaving of the sunken floor base, will also be necessary.

Estimated Costs
$ 25,000

B4. Ganesh: C/P-137
(Domestic style)
Location: Durbar Square
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Ganesh
Religion: Buddhist/Hindu

Building Description

This Ganesh shrine looks very much like an ordinary house. The doorway is carved, as are the cornice line and window frames.

Proposed Repairs

This temple underwent major repairs and renovation only a few years ago. It may need some minor repairs to the carved elements, and the roof may later require relaying after chemical treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 10,000

B5. Bhimsen Mandir: A/P-138
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1681
Renovated: 1968
Deity: Bhimsen
Religion: Hindu
Records: 1680 and 1725

Building Description

This is one of the main temples in Patan's Palace Square. It is a large three-tiered structure with extensive and elaborate carvings. The top roof is gilded and elaborately decorated with a Kailash or metal ribbon and a group of finials. The structure was built by Shrinivas Malla during the seventeenth century and is patronized mostly by the business section of the community.

Proposed Repairs

Thanks to often wealthy patrons, the structure and fabric of this temple have been reasonably well-maintained. However, over the years there have been many modernizations and improvements that are not altogether in character with the building. A cleaning and repair programme, including cleaning the very special roof struts of their silver paint and removal of the uncharacteristic marble panelling would, subject to the worshippers' approval, make this one of the most impressive buildings in the Durbar Square. The timbers and roofs should be chemically treated at the same time.

Estimated Costs
$ 65,000

B6. Hari Shankar: A/P-128
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Deity: Hari Shankar
Religion: Shaiva and Vaishnava

Building Description

This typical three-tiered temple, one of the largest in the square, is built on a stepped plinth. Above, the three-tiered roofs are supported by finely-carved struts representing different divinities. The temple is reputed to have been built by King Siddhi Narasingha Malla. Its chief priest is a Brahman.

Proposed Repairs

This temple underwent structural repairs just prior to the coronation and appears to be in a satisfactory state. The carvings, brickwork, etc, will nevertheless require cleaning, repair and treatment and the roofs should eventually be treated and correctly relaid.

Estimated Costs
$ 65,000

B7. Narsingha: B/P-129
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1590
Deity: Narsinha
Religion: Vaishnava

Building Description

Each entrance to this brick-and-stucco temple has a large portico. The Vishnu temple was built by Purandarasimha, the ruling feudal lord of Patan.

Proposed Repairs

The structure and fabric will need general maintenance and repair and the stucco will need cleaning and repainting. The temple compound, which has many unpleasant modern additions, needs very careful reorganizing to harmonize with its immediate surroundings.

Estimated Costs
$ 20,000

B8. Narayan: B/P-131
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: Seventeenth Century
Deity: Narayan
Religion: Vaishnava

Building Description

This small two-tiered brick temple with tiled roofs is built on a square, stepped plinth. There is a nicely carved door-frame with three openings and a torana above.

Proposed Repairs

The temple requires general maintenance and repair. The carvings need cleaning and treatment, and the roof should be correctly relaid after treatment. As suggested for the Narsingha temple, the compound should be altered to blend with its surroundings.

Estimated Costs
$ 28,000

B9. Char Narayan: A/P-132
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1565
Deity: Chaturvyuha Narayan
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: 1565

Building Description

This is apparently the oldest surviving temple in Patan Durbar Square and one of the most important. It is of two tiers and is built in brick on a triple-stepped plinth. The arcade formed by the columns surrounding the sanctum has a beautifully carved torana. The roofs are supported by richly carved struts depicting the avatars of Vishnu. The temple was built by King Purandarasinha in 1565. The style and proportion of this temple are typical of all of the early temples.

Proposed Repairs

Because of the long sweeping roofs, it is foreseen that some structural consolidation may be necessary. The carvings need cleaning, repair and treatment, and the roofs should be correctly laid after treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 30,000

B10. Bhai Dega: C/P-120
(Brick-and-stucco temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1677
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Shiva
Records: 1677

Building Description

This brick-and-stucco temple presents a mixture of styles as a result of its near-total collapse during the 1934 earthquake. The square structure is built on an older stepped base. It was originally founded by Bhagirath Bhaiva, the Minister of King Shrinivas Malla, and mainly reconstructed in 1934.

Proposed Costs
$ 10,000

B12. Krishna: A/P-124
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1723
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Gopinath (Krishna) with spouses
Religion: Vaishnava
Records: 1723

Building Description

This large octagonal temple of stone is located at the southern entrance to the Durbar Square. It is built on a stepped base. It was built by Yogamati, Yogendra Malla's daughter.

Proposed Repairs

Although one of the largest structures, this temple appears neglected. It is nevertheless an extremely important stone structure, second only to the other Krishna Mandir in the Durbar Square. During the monsoons there is a prolific growth of vegetation and grass between the stonework and discoloration from algae. The stonework needs careful checking and cleaning. The growths should be treated with suitable herbicides.

Estimated Costs
$ 60,000

B14. Degu Tale: A/P-130
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1662
Deity: Taleju Bhawani
Renovated: 1938
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

This three-tiered brick temple, constructed in the traditional style and of great size, is built on the upper floor of a part of the royal palace in Patan. The temple, which was originally built by King Siddhi Narasingha Malla, was burnt down in 1662 and rebuilt thereafter by King Shrinivas Malla. It was later renovated by Juddha Shumshere.

Proposed Repairs

The structure underwent major renovation just prior to the coronation. However, after the 1934 earthquake several changes and additions were probably made to the original structure. Some research and a thorough survey of the structure should be made prior to a renovation programme.

Estimated Costs
$ 125,000

B15. Sundari Chok: A/P-122
(Palace courtyard)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 17th century
Renovated: 1958
Deities: Garuda, Lakshmi Narayan
Religion: Buddhist, Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava

Building Description

Sundari Chok is the most westerly of the courtyards making up the Patan Palace durbar. It was completed in 1627 and was designed as the residence of Siddhi Narasingha Malla. In the centre of the courtyard is the beautiful Tusa Hiti, the bathing tank with waterspout that was built at the same time. It is octagonal in shape, emphasizing the king's devotion to the eight Nagas, the snake divinities of rain. The inner walls of the tank are lined with hundreds of stone-carved deities and the perimeter is surrounded by a pair of sculptured, exquisitely carved windows, doors and other elements. The central window over this entrance is of gilded metal flanked by windows decorated with carved ivory. The name of the courtyard, Sundari, meaning 'beautiful', hardly does justice to its beauty.

Proposed Repairs

This courtyard has been used as offices for several years, resulting in misuse and neglect. As this is one of the major tourist attractions in Patan, it is important that the structure and fabric be properly maintained. A thorough structural survey should be made and the resultant recommendations carried out. The carvings and brickwork should be cleaned and repaired and chemically treated. The roofs should be relaid using the traditional tiles suitably treated. The Hiti will require cleaning, and it is hoped that the water-conduit can be reactivated.

Estimated Costs
$ 100,000

B17. Mul Chok: A/P-126
(Courtyard)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 1666
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Taleju
Religion: Hindu
Records: 1666 and 1799

Building Description

This is the main courtyard of the palace. The structure surrounding the large square courtyard is of uniform height. In the southern wing is the shrine of Taleju. The doorway is complete with torana and flanked by two seventeenth-century repousse figures of Ganga Jamuna. The wood carvings are of good quality, with some unusual windows on the main facade. The courtyard was built in 1966 by Shrinivas Malla.

Proposed Repairs

Since this courtyard has been open to the public it has suffered greatly from theft and damage. If this area is brought under controlled tourism, it will be possible to replace many of the missing metal objects, the torana and the figures. The buildings have been restored so it is hoped that the structure is sound. However, along with the Degu Tale and Taleju, a detailed structural survey should be carried out to ascertain the earliest form. The courtyard should be cleaned, repaired and chemically treated. The roof should be relaid with traditional tiles and suitably treated.

Estimated Costs
$ 80,000

B18. Taleju Mandir: A/P-127
(Three-tiered temple)
Location: Durbar Square
Constructed: 17th Century
Renovated: 1934
Deity: Taleju Bhawani
Religion: Shaivite, Shakta and Vaishnava

Building Description

This three-tiered temple in the traditional style is octagonal and built on the upper level of the Mul Chok. The windows are latticed. The tiled roofs are supported by well-carved struts representing various divinities, and there is a Gajura on the pinnacle. The temple was built in the reign of Shrinivas Malla, in 1671. It was renovated in 1934 after the major earthquake.

Proposed Repairs

As this temple is an extension of the Mul Chok, its repair programme should be carried out currently. A detailed survey should be made and recent alterations or additions rectified. The fabric should be cleaned, repaired and chemically treated and the roof relaid and suitably treated..

Estimated Costs
$ 100,000

C.BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE

C2. Durga Mandir: A/H-7
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Layaku
Deity: Durga
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

This Shikhara-style temple, constructed mostly of brick and terracotta with stone pillars and timber lintels in its portico, rises proudly from a double-stepped plinth. There are four doorways leading to the sanctum, each with a separate porch, supported by delicately carved stone pillars. The terracotta work is of good quality and the combination of different materials is unusual.

Proposed Repairs

This building is of considerable importance both as an individual element and as part of the Durbar group. It has suffered considerably from lack of care and will require careful maintenance and treatment against vegetation growth. The plinth will require resetting.

Estimated Costs
$ 45,000

C3. Pashupatinath: A/B-9
(Two-tiered temple)
Location: Layaku
Renovated: After 1934 and 1968
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva
Records: 1487 and 1494

Building Description

This broad-based, two-tiered traditional-style temple, constructed by Yaksha Malla, stands on a single plinth. The threefold simple door-frames, which almost completely cover the sanctum wall, were incorporated after the 1934 earthquake. The carved roof struts depicting Shiva and a number of important characters from the *Ramayana,* and displaying some examples of erotica at their base, are much older.

Proposed Repairs

This temple has undergone fairly recent renovation but because of its general proportions and heavy roofs its structure will require further attention. The delicate and slender roof struts, which have been augmented by further side supports, require some kind of hidden steel cradle to give the roof support and to enable the struts to be exposed fully to view. The carvings require cleaning, some repair and treatment and the roofs should be relaid after suitable treatment.

Estimated Costs
$ 80,000

C4. Batsala Devi: A/B-10
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Layaku
Constructed: Late 17th Century
Deity: Durga
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

This stone temple, which is the central landmark of the Durbar Square, has a three-stepped base with a colonnade of fourteen octagonal pillars similar to Krishna Mandir. There are eight small pavilions above the cornice, the corner ones being octagonal turrets in the form of miniature temples, each with its own gilded finial. The structure is completed by a tapering Shikhara and a gilded finial decorated with Amalakas, Kalasha and a trident. The temple was built by Bhupatindra Malla in the late 17th or 18th century.

Proposed Repairs

This structure recently underwent partial structural repair and cleaning on two elevations, under the supervision of the Government of Nepal, UNESCO Conservation Project Office. However, there is still a considerable amount of repair work and cleaning to be done to the stonework on the remaining two facades, and the entire plinth requires repaving and resetting.

Estimated Costs

$ 65,000

C5. Bhagwati: A/B-11
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Lavaku
Constructed: 17th Century
Deity: Durga
Religion: Shakta

Building Description

This, the smaller of the two small stone temples, is built also in the Shikhara style. It is located in the south-west corner of the Durbar Square. The steps leading to the entrance are guarded by some particularly fine sculptured pairs of men and animals. In front of the sanctum is a series of relief panels of the Matrika goddesses carved in stone. The Shikhara is capped with a gilded finial. This small but interesting temple was probably built during the Jitmitra-Bhupatindra Malla period.

Proposed Repairs

Most of the larger buildings which used to be adjacent to this structure collapsed completely during the 1934 earthquake. This structure apparently withstood the shock but was left with a marked tilt to it. Its structural stability should be examined, and any necessary repairs carried out. The stonework should be cleaned and treated against vegetation growth such as algae as well as small trees, grasses, etc. The plinth will require repairing and resetting.

Estimated Costs

$ 50,000

C6. Fasi Dega: C/B-12
(Composite temple)
Location: Layaku
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Shiva
Religion: Shaiva

Building Description

Only the base of what must have been a massive structure remains. The extensive stairway is guarded by three different pairs of carved animals. At the top of this five-tiered base there is a modern domed shrine with four porticos. Inside are several sculptures of Hindu gods. Unfortunately little is now known of the history of this temple.

Proposed Repairs

The base of the temple explains something of its former size and grandeur, and therefore must be maintained. The present modern structure housing the gods could be more suitably adapted to its surroundings. It would be interesting to find some earlier record of the size and shape of the original structure.

Estimated Costs

$ 25,000

The remaining Durbar Buildings:
C 7. Basantapur Chok
  C10. Malati Chok
  C11. Bhairab Chok
  C13. Palace of the 55 Windows
  C14. Eta Chok

Building Description

The Bhaktapur Durbar Square suffered badly during the 1934 earthquake, and the majority of the most important buildings, especially those of the palace complex, collapsed, never to be rebuilt. Most of the above courtyards were either severely damaged or razed to the ground. Archaeologically, there are several remains outlining their former size and location, but in building terms, except for those that have been reconstructed, very little has survived. Perhaps the most impressive extant building is the one referred to as the Palace of the Fifty-five Windows, now used as part of the wood-carving museum. The structure is the most easterly block and looks into the Durbar Square. It has three storeys and is of impressive scale. The lower storeys have finely carved windows and doors and on the upper floor originally projected, but during the earthquake the building was badly damaged and had to be reconstructed. Of the remaining courtyards, some have been built in a more modern style whilst others have been converted into quarters or extensions of the museum. In some cases all that remains are the guardian lions. From pre-earthquake drawings and photographs, this durbar must have been a very splendid group of buildings.

Proposed Repairs

At present the only tangible proposal for a renovation and repair programme is one for the Palace of the Fifty-five Windows. The structure should be checked and possibly the upper arcaded floor could be once again projected following former photographs. The carvings should be cleaned and repaired and all the woodwork chemically treated. The roof should be relaid, using the traditional tiles, and suitably treated. Of the remaining buildings and courtyards, a preliminary historical survey should be made to ascertain the buildings' original forms followed by an assessment as to what could be done to restore this area to its former glory. The museum complex could certainly be expanded to make use of some of the unused structure.

Estimated Costs
$ 173,000

C8. Kumari Chok: A/B-8.2

C9. Mul Chok: A/B-8.3

(Gateway and Courtyard)
Location: Layaku
Constructed: 15th to 18th Century
Deities: Maha Vaishnavi, Taleju Bhawani
Religion: Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava
Records: 1452, 1617, 1628, 1684, 1694, 1753, 1826

Building Description

This gate known as Sundhoka, was erected in 1753 by Jaya Ranajit Malla and is perhaps the finest example of gilded copper work in Bhaktapur and even in the Kathmandu Valley. It is very ornate. The panels round the door-frame, which depict a series of ten divinities, are in very fine repousse work. The gate is capped with a small gilded roof with decorated finials and detailed images of elephants and winged lions. The torana over the doorway is extremely intricate and depicts the image of Maha Vaishnavi. Although rather strangely located, this gate marks the entrance to the Mul Chok and the Kumari Chok.

A tortuous route leads to a carved wooden doorway, which is the only entrance to the Mul Chok. Linked to this courtyard is the Kumari Chok. The contents of these two courtyards are said to be some of the most important works of art in the valley. The foundation of the Mul Chok dates back to the thirteenth century. Unlike the other two Taleju Mandirs, the one in Bhaktapur is not an impressively tall building but a single-storey shrine with rich ornamentation. This courtyard has been the subject of many donations by various Bhaktapur monarchs, but especially Bhupatindra Malla. Beyond this courtyard is the Kumari Chok, said to be one of the gems of Nepalese architecture. It is attributed to Jitmitra Malla.

For both religious and security reasons, both of these courtyards are closed to the general public at present. It is hoped, however, that one day they will be opened as part of the general tourism plan to raise funds for their repair and maintenance.

Proposed Repairs

Before any major repair and conservation programme can be drawn up, a tourism policy must be adopted for this palace group. Subject to their being opened for viewing and subject to religious sentiments, a very thorough study of the condition of both the structure and fabric should be made with specific recommendations. At the same time, a policy for security should be evolved in the event of their being opened to the general public. Even if these courtyards are kept closed, it is recommended that a proper maintenance programme should be initiated to protect these vital pieces of art.

Estimated Costs
$ 200,000

C12. Nag Pokhari: A/B-8.6
(Water tank)
Location: Layaku
Constructed: 17th Century

Building Description
In the north-eastern section of the Durbar group there is a small door leading into a former courtyard containing a beautiful bathing tank known as Nag Pokhari. This tank and courtyard were constructed in the early seventeenth century by Jagatir Malla and later repaired by Jitmitra Malla, who had the wooden post with the gilded head of Vasuki, the snake god, erected.

Proposed Repairs
A detailed research and investigation programme should be carried out to establish the former structure of this area. The tank and the surrounding paved garden area will require cleaning up, repairing and resetting. This could become a pleasant resting place for visitors.

Estimated Costs
$ 60,000

C15. Nyatapola: A/B-41
(Five-tiered temple)
Location: Taumadhi Tol
Constructed: 1702
Deity: Siddhi Lakshmi
Records: 1704

Building Description
This is one of the most beautiful storeyed temples in Nepal. Its large five-step base gives it a towering height that dominates everything else in the square. The stairway leading to the temple is lined with pairs of figures: human beings or Dvarapalas identified as the most powerful wrestlers; elephants; lions; Shardulas; and Simhini and Byaghrini. The temple is perfectly proportioned. The twenty columns of the colonnade around the sanctum are slender yet strong. Both these columns and the door frame are beautifully carved. The most impressive woodwork is on the 108 struts illustrating the diverse forms of Bhagwati Mahishamardini and other lesser divinities that support the five tapering roofs. There is a beautiful sculpture of Mahishamardini in the sanctum, but access is restricted to Brahman priests only. The temple was erected in 1702 by Bhupatindra Malla, who is said to have carried bricks to the site to inspire the local people to build the temple quickly.

Proposed Repairs
The sheer size of this temple daunts any renovation programme. However, unlike its neighbour, Nyatapola withstood the 1934 earthquake and therefore must be of exceptional structural integrity. Apparently very little maintenance or repair work other than decoration has been undertaken for several decades. It is important that a survey be made of the structure and any recommendations carried out, as well as the cleaning, repair and treatment of the carvings. The roofs should be re-laid and chemically treated to prevent vegetation growth, a perennial problem.

Estimated Costs
$ 175,000

C16. Kasi Biswanath: A/B-42

Location: Taumadhi Tol
Renovated: After 1934
Deity: Bhairab
Religion: Shaiva
Records: Inscription of 1724

Building Description

This is another prominent temple in Bhaktapur, situated right next to Nyatapola. The existing structure was rebuilt after the earthquake in 1934 in its traditional three-tiered roof style using parts of the former temple. Like many Bhairab temples, this structure is built on a rectangular plan with the longer side of the rectangle facing the square and the main shrine on the upper floor. The doorway has three openings, two of which have a torana above. The first storey has an elaborately carved window-frame with five openings. There are fifty-six carved roof struts depicting the forms of Bhagmati and the Matrika goddesses. The two lower roofs are tiled whilst the upper is gilded and crowned with a set of seven beautiful toranas. During the festival of Bisket in Bhaktapur, Bhairab is taken round in a chariot and plays a leading role in the festivities. He is identified with the Shiva of Kasi Biswanath. An original single-roofed structure was built by Jagat Jyoti Malla; this was later extended by Bhupatindra Malla and completed in 1708.

Proposed Repairs

This structure has undergone several recent repairs, none of which has been entirely satisfactory. It is important that a proper survey be carried out, and that the roofs be correctly laid and treated against vegetation growth. The carvings and brickwork should also be cleaned, repaired and chemically treated.

Estimated Costs

$ 150,000

D. SWAYAMBHU

Inventory: KMZ-4

Traditionally the oldest site in Nepal is Sengu, which rises about two miles westwards from the centre of Kathmandu beyond the Vishnumati River. Here there are two main Chaityas, a small, enclosed one on the western summit. sacred to Manjusri, and the more imposing one on the eastern summit, sacred to the five Buddhas (Pancatathagata) and known as Swayambhu – 'Self-existent'. Since Manjusri is identified with Sarasvati, who is worshipped by Hindus as well as Buddhists, this smaller Chaitya is one of the main national shrines of Nepal. The second one, much larger and far more impressive, has become the main shrine of Nepalese Buddhists as well as a place of prime importance for Tibetan pilgrims. Of its history, buried beneath the shrine we see today, nothing certain is known. The dome itself is of the same low, flat type, characteristic of the other great Chaityas of the valley. It stands upon a large square platform, constructed presumably by levelling off the actual hilltop, which falls steeply away on all sides. The main approach from the east ascends by a long flight of steps, guarded towards the summit by pairs of creatures – garudas, peacocks, horses, elephants and lions – all the 'vehicles' of the five Buddhas. At the top of the steps is an enormous Vajra (thunderbolt) five feet long, symbol of sacred power, resting upon a raised Mandala. The eyes of supreme Buddhahood peer down from the Harmika over the dome, and above towers the great gilded pinnacle with its thirteen rings and crowning parasol...

'Interesting also is the Ajima temple on the platform of the great Swayambhu Chaitya, for here the goddess is no longer represented by a stone but by an image of Bhagvati. These are clearly the typically progressive stages of identification of indigenous gods with a Hindu type'.*

* I.D.L. Snellgrove. *Shrines and Temples of Nepal.* Arts Asiatiques. Vol. VIII. fasc. 1 pp.3-10 and fasc.2 pp. 93-120. Paris 1961.

D1. Swayambhu Stupa: A/K-322
(Stupa)
Location: Swayambhu Hill
Constructed: 12th Century, extended in 1371, 1381, 1620, 1654 etc
Deities: Vairochana, Akshobhya Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amogasiddhi
Religion: Buddhist
Records: 1371, 1381, 1620, 1654 etc.

Building Description

This stupa is reportedly the oldest Buddhist monument in Nepal. Its legendary history goes back to the time when the valley was a lake. It is beautifully situated on a circular base, and there are four niches containing golden images of the Dhyani Buddhas. The dome is in the form of a flattened hemisphere. The Harmika is now faced by brass sheets and is distinguished by the farseeing eyes on each elevation. Above, the entire superstructure is of metal, with four toranas, and a Yasthi supporting a series of diminishing stages; the whole is capped by a Chhatravali. The courtyard around the stupa is packed with votive stupas of varying sizes.

Proposed Repairs

The solid stupa is virtually indestructible, but much of the decoration, the shrines, the ornaments and the Harmika, etc in metal have been damaged by monkeys as well as worn away by pilgrims. These elements need careful maintenance and repair. A proper annual maintenance programme is also needed to clean the monument of its votive offerings.

B3. Shantipur: A/K-326
(Single-storeyed brick building)
Location: Swayambhu
Renovated: 1938 and 1968
Deity: Mahasamvaradigana
Religion: Buddhist
Records: 1657

Building Description

This single-storeyed brick-and-stucco shrine, located on the northern side of the Swayambhu hill, is very simple in concept in that it consists of a low rectangular building with a pitched roof of corrugated sheeting. However, it is considered to be one of the more important sites in this complex, since it is reputed to contain the likeliness of the nine Nagas drawn in their own blood. If ever there were a drought, rain would fall as soon as these images were worshipped. Although access to the inner shrine is forbidden to all but the king, select worshippers are permitted to enter the second room, the entrance porch, which is worshipped generally.

Proposed Repairs

The very history and nature of this temple will make it a difficult subject for conservation and repair. However, in the past the Nepalese Government has carried out renovation programmes on two separate occasions, once in 1938 and again in 1968. In the early 1970s the wall paintings in the porch were cleaned and restored. Like many of the structures on the Swayambhu hill, this building is threatened by the landslide conditions that are prevalent all the way around the hill. In order to maintain the secrecy and sanctity of this shrine, it may be necessary to carry out fairly extensive under-pinning at its northern end. The building is in need of a new roof structure and roof covering. The environs of this important temple are spoilt by the presence of some unpleasant latrines that should be removed, and finally the whole area should be paved.

D. SWAYAMBHU

Inventory: KMZ-4

Traditionally the oldest site in Nepal is Sengu, which rises about two miles westwards from the centre of Kathmandu beyond the Vishnumati River. Here there are two main Chaityas, a small, enclosed one on the western summit. sacred to Manjusri, and the more imposing one on the eastern summit, sacred to the five Buddhas (Pancatathagata) and known as Swayambhu – 'Self-existent'. Since Manjusri is identified with Sarasvati, who is worshipped by Hindus as well as Buddhists, this smaller Chaitya is one of the main national shrines of Nepal. The second one, much larger and far more impressive, has become the main shrine of Nepalese Buddhists as well as a place of prime importance for Tibetan pilgrims. Of its history, buried beneath the shrine we see today, nothing certain is known. The dome itself is of the same low, flat type, characteristic of the other great Chaityas of the valley. It stands upon a large square platform, constructed presumably by levelling off the actual hilltop, which falls steeply away on all sides. The main approach from the east ascends by a long flight of steps, guarded towards the summit by pairs of creatures – garudas, peacocks, horses, elephants and lions – all the 'vehicles' of the five Buddhas. At the top of the steps is an enormous Vajra (thunderbolt) five feet long, symbol of sacred power, resting upon a raised Mandala. The eyes of supreme Buddhahood peer down from the Harmika over the dome, and above towers the great gilded pinnacle with its thirteen rings and crowning parasol...

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(Stupa)
Location: Swayambhu Hill
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Deities: Vairochana, Akshobhya Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amogasiddhi
Religion: Buddhist
Records: 1371, 1381, 1620, 1654 etc.

Building Description

This stupa is reportedly the oldest Buddhist monument in Nepal. Its legendary history goes back to the time when the valley was a lake. It is beautifully situated on a circular base, and there are four niches containing golden images of the Dhyani Buddhas. The dome is in the form of a flattened hemisphere. The Harmika is now faced by brass sheets and is distinguished by the farseeing eyes on each elevation. Above, the entire superstructure is of metal, with four toranas, and a Yasthi supporting a series of diminishing stages; the whole is capped by a Chhatravali. The courtyard around the stupa is packed with votive stupas of varying sizes.

Proposed Repairs

The solid stupa is virtually indestructible, but much of the decoration, the shrines, the ornaments and the Harmika, etc in metal have been damaged by monkeys as well as worn away by pilgrims. These elements need careful maintenance and repair. A proper annual maintenance programme is also needed to clean the monument of its votive offerings.

B3. Shantipur: A/K-326
(Single-storeyed brick building)
Location: Swayambhu
Renovated: 1938 and 1968
Deity: Mahasamvaradigana
Religion: Buddhist
Records: 1657

Building Description

This single-storeyed brick-and-stucco shrine, located on the northern side of the Swayambhu hill, is very simple in concept in that it consists of a low rectangular building with a pitched roof of corrugated sheeting. However, it is considered to be one of the more important sites in this complex, since it is reputed to contain the likeliness of the nine Nagas drawn in their own blood. If ever there were a drought, rain would fall as soon as these images were worshipped. Although access to the inner shrine is forbidden to all but the king, select worshippers are permitted to enter the second room, the entrance porch, which is worshipped generally.

Proposed Repairs

The very history and nature of this temple will make it a difficult subject for conservation and repair. However, in the past the Nepalese Government has carried out renovation programmes on two separate occasions, once in 1938 and again in 1968. In the early 1970s the wall paintings in the porch were cleaned and restored. Like many of the structures on the Swayambhu hill, this building is threatened by the landslide conditions that are prevalent all the way around the hill. In order to maintain the secrecy and sanctity of this shrine, it may be necessary to carry out fairly extensive under-pinning at its northern end. The building is in need of a new roof structure and roof covering. The environs of this important temple are spoilt by the presence of some unpleasant latrines that should be removed, and finally the whole area should be paved.

D4. Pratapur: B/K-328
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Swayambhu
Constructed: 1654
Renovated: 1922
Deity: Mahasamvar
Religion: Buddhist

Building Description

This brick-and-stone temple, located on a stone plinth to the south-east of the Swayambhunath Stupa, is a curvilinear structure capped with a gilded Gajur. It contains images of Buddha as well as images of Swanarya and Shukarasya. It was built by King Pratap Malla in memory of himself. The Swayambhu Renovation Committee renovated it in 1922.

Proposed Repairs

This Shikara was threatened by the 1978 landslip, and as a result of exposing its brick foundation, it was possible to underpin and bolt a retaining beam on the defective south and east elevations. The structure itself requires a considerable amount of repair and consolidation as well as some careful treatment of vegetation growth. The plinth on the remaining elevations also requires resetting. The building should be monitored during the monsoons to establish whether there is any further movement.

D5. Anantapur: B/K-329
(Shikhara-style temple)
Location: Swayambhu
Constructed: 1654
Renovated: 1922
Deities: Nil Saraswati, Ugratara, Ekajati
Religion: Buddhist
Records: 1654

Building Description

This brick-and-stucco temple set on a small stone plinth is located on a platform to the north-east of the Swayambhunath Stupa. It has a curvilinear tower with some architectural decoration, and a shrine-like structure. It was built by Queen Ananta Priyadevi, one of the favourite queens of King Pratap Malla, in her own memory and contains a stone inscription dated 1654. It was renovated in 1922 by the Swayambhu Renovation Committee.

Proposed Repairs

This structure is threatened by a possible landslip condition on the north-eastern side of the slope (i.e. north of the steps), similar to that which took place on the south-eastern slope. Slight rotation in an easterly direction is apparent and it is recommended that the structure be monitored during the monsoons. If a drainage programme similar to that already executed is anticipated, and the foundation pattern is similar, then a retaining beam bolted into the foundations is recommended. A similar programme of repair and consolidation is envisaged for Anantapur as for Pratappur.

Swayambhu building repair and conservation: KMZ-4
$ 300,000

Swayambhu public works $ 653,000

The public works are limited to drainage and planting the slopes, and drainage and repaving of the platforms. The budget will also cover demolition of unwanted structures and the provision of new structures such as a museum, a series of resthouses for pilgrims and the necessary visitor facilities. It does not allow for consolidation of the landslips.

Total $ 953,000

E. PASHUPATINATH GUHESWARI

Inventory: VMZ-5

The temple precinct of Pashupati at Deopatan is located in the centre of the Kathmandu Valley. It extends along both sides of the Bagmati river; on the east it includes the entire hill adjoining the present airport. The main feature of the site is the sacred Bagmati river and the large gilded double-roofed temple of Shiva Pashupati, the lord of animals, on its western bank.

The temple itself dates from 1696, but its history goes back to 1395, when the previously destroyed Shivalinga was re-established on the present site. In 1412 King Jaya Jyoti Malla constructed a three-tiered temple, which was later devastated by termites. Queen Gangadevi partly restored the lower two floors in 1648, and the temple was entirely reconstructed by Birpalendra Malla in 1696. Since then there have been so many additions and refurbishings that it is difficult to tell how much belongs to the original period.

The temple has gilded toranas, depicting Shiva. Its struts show Shivapanchayan, Bishnupanchayan, Rampanchayan and Shodashalakshmi. Two roofs are covered with gilded brass sheets. The main entrance is marked by a giant gilded bull. Inside the temple, near the western gate, is an ancient four-faced linga confronted by two Aryatara Devis. Towards the southern gate are two standing Gauris.

Also within the courtyard is the two-storeyed temple of Vasuki with carved toranas, depicting Vasuki and struts carved with the Nagas. In the sanctum is a stone image of Vasuki in human form. This temple was constructed in 1649 by Pratap Malla. Around the temple are several other images.

Along the western bank of the Bagmati river are the monuments described below.

Location: Pashupatinath, Deopatan
Constructed: 6th century onwards
Religion: Hindu

Description of Monuments

Arya Ghat: This is a long strip of stone-paved platforms at the edge of the river, stepping down to the water level. It is considered a holy place for ritual bathing. There is a sixth century stone image of Birupaksha, a shrine of the Ganga Devi with an image covered by silver ornaments and several Shivalingas. The area also contains platforms for the cremation of members of the royal family and other distinguished people.

Surya Ghat: Adjacent to the Arya Ghat and also made up of stone platforms. The area contains a sixth-century Surya Mandal and sculptures of Yamarajanantanarayan, Ganesh, Batsala Mai, Mangala Gauri, Ganga and several Shivalingas.

Bachhareshwari: A small two-roof traditional temple dating from the sixth century with a beautiful torana containing an image of Bhagvati, and carved roof struts showing the Ashta Bhairab and the Asthamatrikas. The Bachhareshwari goddess herself is in the centre of the temple in the form of a stone Kalasha. Outside the temple there are several images of animals.

Rajrajeshwari: A free-standing, single-storeyed temple with a brass-plated roof, struts carved with Astha Bhairab and the Ashtamatrikas, and a torana carved with Rajrajeshwari. It was established in 1407 by Dev Raj Bhatta and is devoted to Shrikanathada Nava Durga.

Panchadeva: A large, square, brick-paved courtyard surrounded by two-storeyed Dharmashal structures with a huge Shikhara-style shrine of Shiva flanked on all four sides by smaller Shikhara-style temples, all of the nineteenth century. The courtyard contains a large number of sculptures and images.

Banakali: A middle shrine housing a stone image of Banakali of the sixth century. The pith or shrine is framed by a carved stone torana showing the Chepu and images of Ganesh and Kumar. Images of Akash Bhairab and a Shivalinga are nearby.

Jayabageshwari: A sixth century three-tiered traditional temple with a cruciform floor plan. The tympanum shows Bhagvati. The carved roof struts depict the Matrikas. Inside there are images of Nila Bhairab, Ganesh and Bhagvati. Opposite the Jayabageshwari compound is a small sunken 'hitti' (Sundhara), with a gilded water spout, which was built by King Jayasthiti Raj Malla in 1387. It is considered to be one of the other Lunhitis in the valley. Among the stone sculptures of early date, within the surrounding walls, are images of Vishnu, Surya, Lingas and Licchavi Chaityas.

Bhubaneshwari: A two-tiered temple of the seventeenth century with brass tympanum showing the Mahishamardini, and struts depicting the Matrikas, Bhairab and Dikapal. The goddess is worshipped as the mother of Pashupati. The site consists of a small-walled compound and contains images of Nandi, Ganesh, Vishnu, Surya and remnants of a small Ashok Chaitya.

Dakshinamurti: A small two-storeyed eighteenth century temple with carved struts. The shrine is devoted to Guru Dakshina Murti, the legendary teacher of Pashupati. Up river, on the Bagmati, before it enters the gorge above the Arya Ghat, another area contains an extensive line of ghats.

Gauri Ghat: Of relatively recent construction dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century. It contains a large number of sculptures, some dating back to the seventeenth century. Its origin is said to be connected with the place where Parvati conducted her meditations.

Shivalingas: Along the river and opposite the approach to the main plaza and the Arya Ghat a large number of small stone shrines contain Shivalingas constructed along the terraced retaining walls stepping up towards the hill.

Guheswari complex: Leading away from the two bridges that cross the Bagmati river are two paths going up the hill via stone steps and eventually merging into one wide path which approaches the top of the hill. This very well-placed path is recessed into the hillside and protected by stepped retaining walls constructed during the time of the great builder, Bhimsen Thapa. On top of the hill are many votive Shikharas and shrines housing Shivalingas. The most extensive groups are the three described below.

Vishwarup temple complex: A large square courtyard surrounded by two-storeyed dharamsalas. In the centre is a three-storeyed structure influenced by the Moghul style, though built during the nineteenth century. The central temple contains an image of Vishvarupakama Kameshwar. Beyond, before the path descends to the Guheswari temple, there is a plaza surrounded by Pathis and Lingas. In the centre is the Gorakhanath Shikhara.

Gorakhanath Shikhara: A tall brick structure from the eighteenth century flanked by a large brass trident. The shrine houses a footprint of the Gorakhanath and Naga.

Guheswari: Down the main path, the shrine of the spouse of Shiva in her manifestation as Kali is to be found. Within a small courtyard is the single-storeyed shrine with latticed windows. It has a golden gate with torana showing Vhanduva, Jhadar, Kinkijal and the Nagas. Inside the shrine are images of Guheswarikunda and Bhairab, Asthamatrika, Shiva Bhagyati, Vasuki and Guhyekali. The goddess, in the form of a Kalasha, is in a sunken spot in the courtyard. The construction date is unknown, but the first recorded restoration carried out by King Malla was in 1653. The gilded roof was added in 1888.

Proposed Conservation Recommendations

Pashupatinath and Guheswari constitute the largest temple complex in the valley, covering an extended area on both sides of the Bagmati river. The temple of Pashupati is regarded with the greatest veneration, not only in the Kathmandu valley and Nepal but even beyond the national borders. Judging from the inscriptions and sculptures, which date back to the Licchavi period, it appears that an important shrine was located here as early as the sixth century. There is much evidence to testify to the continuing importance of the site which has had the patronage of the rulers of several towns within the valley. Royal patronage continues even today. There are a great many legends concerning the origin of the place but it would take extensive study to reveal their meanings. Each of the previously mentioned shrines requires a certain amount of renovation or maintenance, but it is felt that environmental control is of far greater importance. Tourism will always be limited as this is an extremely holy centre for Hindus to which only the faithful have access. It is therefore proposed that assistance should be limited to protecting the environment, cleaning up and repairing as well as resetting the myriad important stone structures, and the repair and maintenance of some of the smaller structures. Another proposal is to adapt and convert one of the existing structures into a museum or exhibition hall to contain a graphic exposition of the Shiva cult and to explain the art, religion and archaeology to be found in this, perhaps one of the oldest, settlements in the Kathmandu valley.

EstimatedCosts
$ 670,000

Pashupatinath Zone Conservation: VMZ-5	$ 177,000
Pashupatinath Zone Public Works: VMZ- 5	158,000
Guheswari Zone Conservation: VMZ-5	177,000
Guheswari Zone Public Works: VMZ-5	158,000
TOTAL:	$ 670,000

F. BAUDHANATH

Inventory: VMZ-3

Baudhanath, the largest stupa in Nepal, lies some 8 kilometres east of Kathmandu. The site is on flat land, surrounded for a short distance by gradually ascending terraces. The giant solid dome with its gilded brass Chhatra, Gajura and Chandura, is based on a series of widely outbranching terraces enhanced by a roughly circular wall with 147 niches, each having four or five prayer-wheels. 108 sculptures are set in the uppermost terrace or pedestal. The mandala-shaped floor plan is oriented east-west by north-south. The stupa is surrounded by two and three-storeyed houses, which accommodate a large number of northern and guild people, both transients and permanent residents.

The legendary builder of the stupa was King Manadev, of the fifth century. According to Gopal Bansawali, the stupa was repaired during the sixth, seventh, and twenteeth centuries by Kings Shivadev, Pratap Malla, Lama Malipa and the Stupa Renovation Committee, respectively.

The site is of great importance in the historical, cultural, and religious life of the Nepalese, particularly to the people from the northern regions and Tibet. It is in the custody of a Lama who resides near the main entrance.

Location: Boudha
Panchayat: Kathmandu
District, Boudha
Boundaries: Stupa with
surrounding small settlement

Recommendations for Conservation

This site is more in need of environmental protection than physical repair. The stupa is a solid and almost indestructible mass. However, the surrounding buildings, mostly of private occupation, are vital to the overall quality of this unique site. Already many of these traditional buildings are being replaced by ugly modern structures, totally out of scale. Strict control with regard to scale and materials should be exercised over any rebuilding. Within the building ring, the whole area should be properly drained and repaved, carefully demarcating the prayer path and that of the general public. The surrounding area should remain as farmland, and no physical structure should be permitted on it. The existing road should be diverted away from the site and proper parking facilities provided.

Estimated Costs

$ 266,000

Building Conservation: VMZ-3	$ 58,000
Public Works etc: VMZ-3	208,000
Total:	266,000

(Most of the funds will go towards environmental protection and control).

G. Changu Narayan

Inventory: VMZ-9
Project Nos. 28-29
(Three-tiered traditional temple)
Location: Changu above
the Manohara river
Deity: Garuda Narayan, Harihar
Bhon Lokeshvar

The temple of Changu Narayan is built on the saddle of a hill that forms part of a range that penetrates the central valley from the east. From the hilltop, said to be the site of one of the valley's earliest settlements, there is an excellent view of the valley. The zone, extending down the Manchara river, can be approached by three different paths. From the Sankhu road on the north, a field-path leads across the river and up the hill to the temple. There are two routes from the south, both branching off the Nagarkot road.

The temple of Changu Narayan is one of the most celebrated Vaishnava shrines in the valley. Its origin dates back to the fourth century, but the earliest inscriptions belong to the ruler Manadev (c. 500). The Licchavi rulers appear to have been great patrons of Vishnu. Two stone pillars erected during Manadev's rule remain today, but the original Shankh and Chakro sculptures and a stone plinth for an image of Garuda are more recent replacements. Since these images are placed before the main shrine, on the main axis of the courtyard, it may be inferred that the temple of Manadev's time occupied the same position as the present structure. The central image in the sanctum is worshipped by Hindus as Garuda Narayan, by Buddhists as Harihar Bhon Lokeshvar.

The temple is known to have been restored during the lifetime of the Ganga Maharani, consort of Shiva Simha Malla, who reigned during the later 1500s. Destroyed by fire in 1702, it was then completely rebuilt. Although the present temple is not one of the oldest of its style in the valley, some of its decorative ornaments are of a much earlier period.

The entrance is flanked by two stone elements. The central opening of the triple doorway has a large gilded torana.

The temple is decorated by many bells and lamps hanging from the caves. The struts are beautifully carved with multi-armed deities. The lower roof is of tile and the upper one of gilded copper, with a brightly gilded pinnacle. Outside the temple are bells in stone frames, a three-metre-high stone pillar with a huge bronze shell and other symbols of Vishnu. Within a small metal shrine on the western side are the beautiful seventeenth century figures of Bhupatindra Malla and his queen. There is also a life-size stone image of the Vaintej, the human-faced Garuda, dating from the fifth century. The courtyard next to the main shrine contains a series of smaller shrines and wonderful sculptures of early date. A brief listing is given on the following page, starting north of the main shrine and moving clockwise.

Smaller shrines adjacent to the main one:

Krishna, a shrine of recent origin with a stone image of Krishna flanked by two stone sculptures of Narayan and Garuda Narayan from the eighth century.

Nriteshwar, a small shrine with a stone tympanum carved with Nriteshwar between Nadi and Brindi, and a seventeenth century stone water-tank.

Narayan, an image of Vishnu (Sri Mahadev Narayan) dating from 1693 on a stone platform.

Mahavishnu, a sixteenth century image of Mahavishnu seated on the four-armed Garuda with a beautiful central image of the deity on a stone platform.

Shiva, a small nineteenth century enclosed shrine in Chaitya form with an image of Soma-Lingeswar.

A large stepped stone/brick platform surrounding a huge tree, supporting several sculptures and stone images:
(a) Avalokiteshwar (thirteenth century); (b) Garuda Narayan (fifteenth century); (c) Durga (seventeenth); (d) two Vishnu images (fourteenth); (e) Surya (seventeenth); (f) Pashupati Linga (seventeenth); and (g) Shivalinga (seventeeth).

Ganesh, a small shrine with a carved stone image of Ganesh and a tympanum decorated with Chhepu, all originating from the nineteenth century.

Chinna Masta, a gilded single-roof temple of rectangular plan constructed during the seventeenth century and containing images of Chinna Masta with the Saytamatrikas from the thirteenth century.

Mahadev, a square-based Chaitya-shaped shrine on a stone platform housing a Shivalinga of recent origin.

Vishwarupa, a stone image of the Vishwarupa Vishnu from the eighteenth century; a Mahavishnu and Ganesh from the sixteenth century; and a Surya and Durga from the seventeenth century.

Lakshmi, Narayan, seventeenth century, square based, single storyed temple on a stepped platform containing stone images of Vishnu Vikrants and Narasinha from the eigth and thirteenth centuries respectively. Within the sanctum of the shrine are seventeenth century stone images of Lakshmi and Narayan riding on Guruda.

Bhairab, a carved stone image of Bhairab standing on the open plaza, adjacent to the main entrance, with a small open stone shrine from the sixteenth century.

Kileshwar, a small two-tiered traditional-style temple or Kileshwar Mahadev with four carved tympanums and struts from the seventeenth century. The four-faced linga in the sanctum is plated with silver.

Recommendations for Conservation

This building complex offers perhaps the most compact unit in need of repair. The temple itself is one of the finest in the valley, and its situation and surroundings embody the very essence of the Kathmandu valley. Because of its remoteness, the main temple structure and the surrounding resthouses have been badly neglected. Many of the subsidiary buildings have collapsed, and others are on the point of disintegration. The whole historic complex requires a detailed study and survey, and a renovation programme for the whole zone should be prepared. The temple itself will require a certain amount of structural consolidation, the delicate roof of struts are not capable of supporting the roofs and will need to be strengthened by some hidden steel cradles. The roofs are also in bad shape and will require relaying and protection against vegetational growth. The wood carvings will need careful cleaning and repair, and all timbers should be chemically treated. The encircling resthouses, which are an integral part of the complex, should be repaired and rehabilitated and could possibly be designed to house the invaluable sculptures, thus helping to overcome the security risk. All the listed shrines and small temples should also be renovated to a comparable standard, and the whole enclosed courtyard should be carefully repaved following the original pattern.

Estimated Costs
$ 505,000

Building repair and conservation: VMZ-9	$ 377,000
Public works: VMZ-9	128,000
Total	$ 505,000

Footnotes to Chapters

CHAPTER 1: THE PRE-DAWN OF HISTORY

1. A 'Naga' is a mythical serpent, whose powers can be beneficial or evil depending on the context. Nagas, at any rate, are feared and venerated.
2. Prayag Raj Sharma, "Culture and Religion", in *Nepal in Perspective*, ed. Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana and Kamal P. Malla (Kathmandu: Centre for Economic Development and Administration, 1973), p.68.
3. Dilli Raman Regmi, *Ancient Nepal* (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhya, 1960), p.31.
4. Lain Singh Bangdel, *The Early Sculptures of Nepal* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., 1982).
5. Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society Inc., 1964), p.5.

CHAPTER 2: THE LICCHAVI PERIOD

1. There is a divergence of views on this story, some authorities regarding it as a legendary concoction (e.g. Tucci), others accepting this as fact. At any rate, there is little doubt that there was a Tibetan incursion and that Buddhism and, along with it, Nepali artisans and trade flowed into Tibet thereafter.
2. Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala:* A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 26.
3. Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society Inc., 1964) p.24.
4. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal: Part I, Sculpture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 163. See also Kramrisch, p.24.
5. Stella Kramrisch, p.24.
6. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal: Part II, Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), p.24. See also pp. 22-24.
7. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal: Part I, Sculpture*, p. 163.
8. Pal, p.5.
9. Slusser, p.23.

CHAPTER 3: THE DARK AGES

1. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal: Part II, Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), p.5.
2. Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.46.
3. Slusser, p.44.
4. Kamal Prakash Malla, *The Road to Nowhere* (Kathmandu: Sajha Publication, 1979), p.229.
5. Stella Kramrisch, "Nepalese Paintings," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol.1, No.2, 1933, pp. 129-147., See also Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society Inc, 1964), pp.39-40.
6. Ernst Waldschmidt and Rose Waldschmidt, *Art Treasures from the Himalayas*. (Calcutta: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1969), p.34.
7. N.R. Banerjee, "An Introduction to Nepalese Art," in *Nepalese Art*, (Kathmandu: Department of Archaeology, 1966), p.21.
8. Banerjee, p.21.
9. Pal, p.164.
10. Giuseppe Tucci, *Nepal, The Discovery of the Malla*. Translated from Italian by Lovett Edwards (New York: E.P. Dutto, 1962), p.22.
11. Tucci, p.28.
12. Pal, p.39.
13. Tucci, p.23.
14. Pal, p.135. See also pp. 34-36.
15. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, *Licchavikälkä Abhilekh* (Kathmandu: Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, 1973), p.1. (In Nepali).

CHAPTER 4: THE MALLA PERIOD

1. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, "Doyaharü Ko Hun?" *Purnima*, No.4., 1965, pp.20-31. (In Nepali).
2. Giuseppe Tucci, *Nepal, The Discovery of the Malla*. Translated from Italian by Lovett Edwards (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), pp.60-65.
3. Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal c. 850-1482* (Rome: Italian Institute for Middle and Far East. Serie Orientale Rome No.LIV, Second Revised Edition, 1984), p.210.
4. Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 54.
5. Slusser, pp. 55-58.
6. This point as we have indicated earlier is disputed by some authorities, but it offers the best shorthand and dramatic reference to the initiation of Nepalese cultural influence in Tibet.
7. Ulrich Wiesner, *Nepalese Temple Architecture: Its Characteristics and its Relations to Indian Development Studies in South Asian Culture*, Vol. VIII, ed. J.E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), pp.34-51.
8. Ernst Waldschmidt and Rose Waldschmidt, *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas* (Calcutta: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co.), p.45.
9. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, *Itihäs-Samsodhanko Pramäna-prameya*, Part I (Kathmandu: Jagadamba Prakashan, 1962) pp.33, 40-41. (In Nepali).
10. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, "Saktisaï Bhäradar Rämavarddanharü Ra Tätkalika Nepal," *Purnima*, No.7, 1965, p.25.
11. The 'Mahapatras' were a group of rich and powerful nobles who, for a certain period, were more decisive than the kings.
12. Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal c. 850-1480*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Italian Institute for Middle and Far East, Serie Orientale Rome LIV), p.178.
13. Dilli Raman Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Part IV (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhya, 1966), pp. 86-88.
14. Dilli Raman Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Part I (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhya, 1965), p.50.
15. A.W. Macdonald and Anne Vergati Stahl, *Newar Art* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1979), p.7.
16. Macdonald and Stahl, p.150.
17. Macdonald and Stahl, p.149.

CHAPTER 5: THE GORKHA PERIOD

1. The term 'Mukthiar' can be loosely translated as principal person in charge of the country.

CHAPTER: 6 THE RANA CENTURY

1. Baburam Acharya, "The Cultural Heritage of Nepal," *The Gorkhapatra*, August 2, 1963.
2. This anecdote is quoted by K.P. Malla, *The Road to Nowhere* (Kathmandu: Sajha Publication, 1979), p.212.
3. N.R. Banerjee, *Nepalese Architecture* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1980), pp. 152-154.
4. The labeda-surwal is the tight pants and a sort of matching shirt, worn above the trousers, that is typical male Nepali attire.
5. A 'Melecha' is a person outside the fold of the caste-system.
6. Yadu Nath Khanal, "Literature," in *Nepal in Perspective*, ed. Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana and Kamal P. Malla (Kathmandu: Centre for Economic Development and Administration, 1973), p.122.
7. Suttee is the custom by which widows are burnt alive on the husbands' funeral pyre.

CHAPTER 7: THE MODERN ERA

1. Bhuwan Lal Joshi and Leo E. Rose, *Democratic Innovations in Nepal: A Case Study of Political Acculturation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p.vii.
2. N.R. Banerjee, *Nepalese Architecture* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1980), p.152.

CHAPTER 8: THE NATURE OF THE LIVING CULTURE

1. Percy Brown, *Picturesque Nepal* (New Delhi: Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers, 1971), pp.129-30.
2. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art,* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), pp. 566; 174-77.
3. In David L. Snellgrove, ed. and trans. *The Hevajra Tantra, A Critical Study,* London Oriental Series, Vol.6. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p.159.

   We find an interesting translation of instructions for Nepalese painters which illustrate an extreme instance of how such ritual representations should be: "By a painter who belongs to our tradition, by a yogin of our tradition, should this fearful painting be done, and it should be painted with the five colours reposing in a human skull and with a brush made from the hair of a corpse. She who is to spin the thread and weave the canvas should also be of our tradition and united in its sacramental power. (It should be painted under these circumstances) in a lonely spot at noon on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight, in a ferocious state of mind from the drinking of some wine, with the body naked and adorned with the bone accoutrements; one should eat the sacrament in its foul and impure form, having placed one's own mudra at one's left side, she who is beautiful, compassionate, well-endowed with youth and beauty, adorned with flowers and beloved of her master."
4. A.W. Macdonald and Anne Vergati Stahl, *Newar Art* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., 1979), pp. 5-6.
5. John Sanday, "Building Conservation in Nepal" (UNESCO Technical Report, 1972) Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/78/247/ (UNDP), pp.21-22.
6. Brown, pp.75-76.

CHAPTER 9: GODS, GUTHIS, FESTIVALS AND LEGENDS

1. Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley,* Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.214.
2. Mary M. Anderson, *The Festivals of Nepal* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1977), p.144.
3. Anderson, p.144.
4. Slusser, p.368.
5. Colin Rosser, "Social Mobility in the Newar Caste System," in *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India, and Ceylon: Anthropological Studies in Hindu-Buddhist Contact Zones,* ed. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966), pp.96-87.
6. Mahesh Chandra Regmi, *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal,* Vol. IV (Berkeley: University of California, 1968), p.2.
7. Anderson, p.261.

CHAPTER 10: DECAY AND RESTORATION

1. N.R. Banerjee, *Nepalese Architecture* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1980), p.152.
2. Banerjee, p.152.
3. See Appendix I for the detailed figures.
4. John Sanday, "Building Conservation in Nepal" (UNESCO Technical Report, 1978), Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/78/247 (UNDP), pp.101-102.
5. See Appendix II which abbreviates this list.
6. John Sanday, p.162.
7. John Sanday, p.86.

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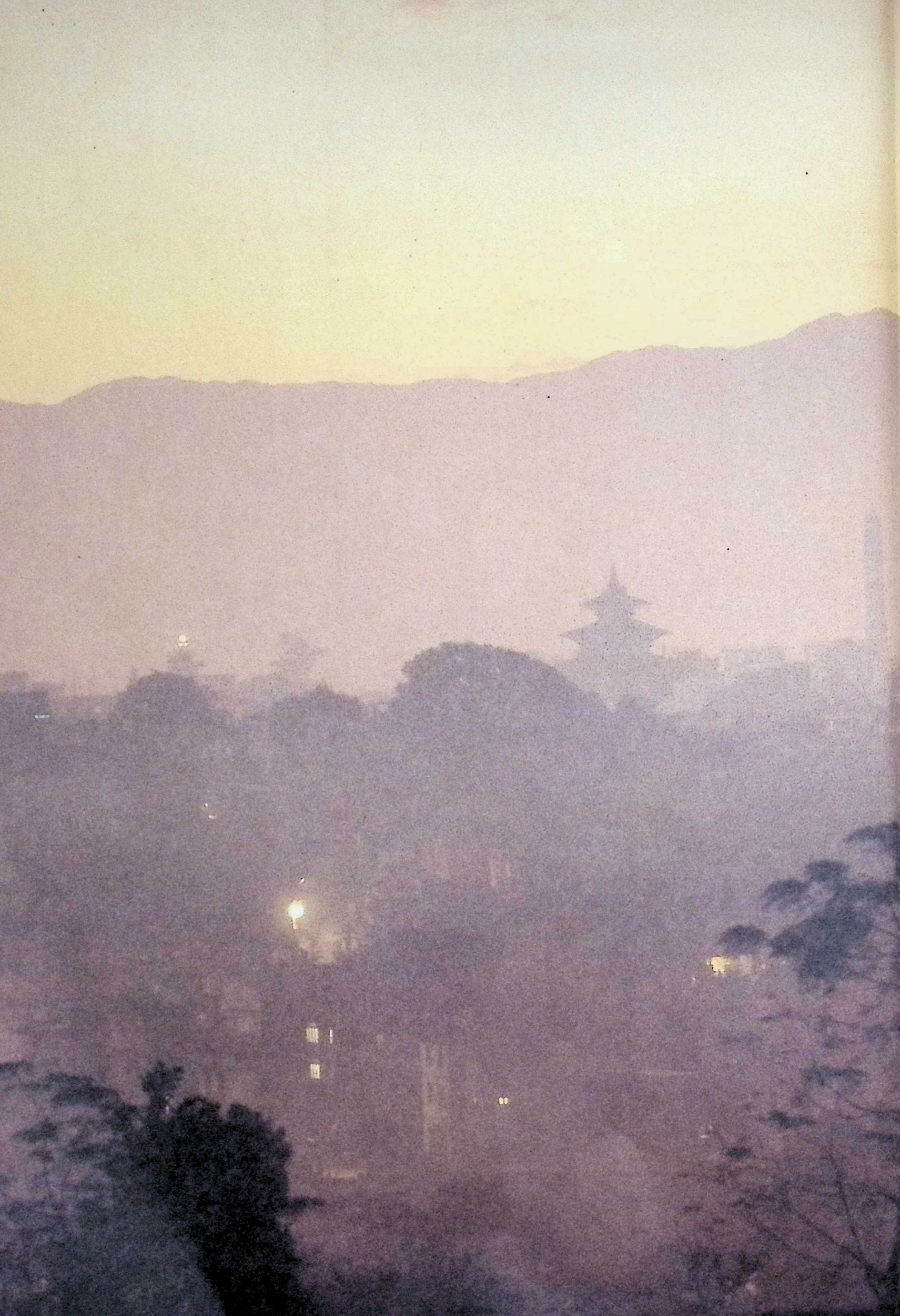

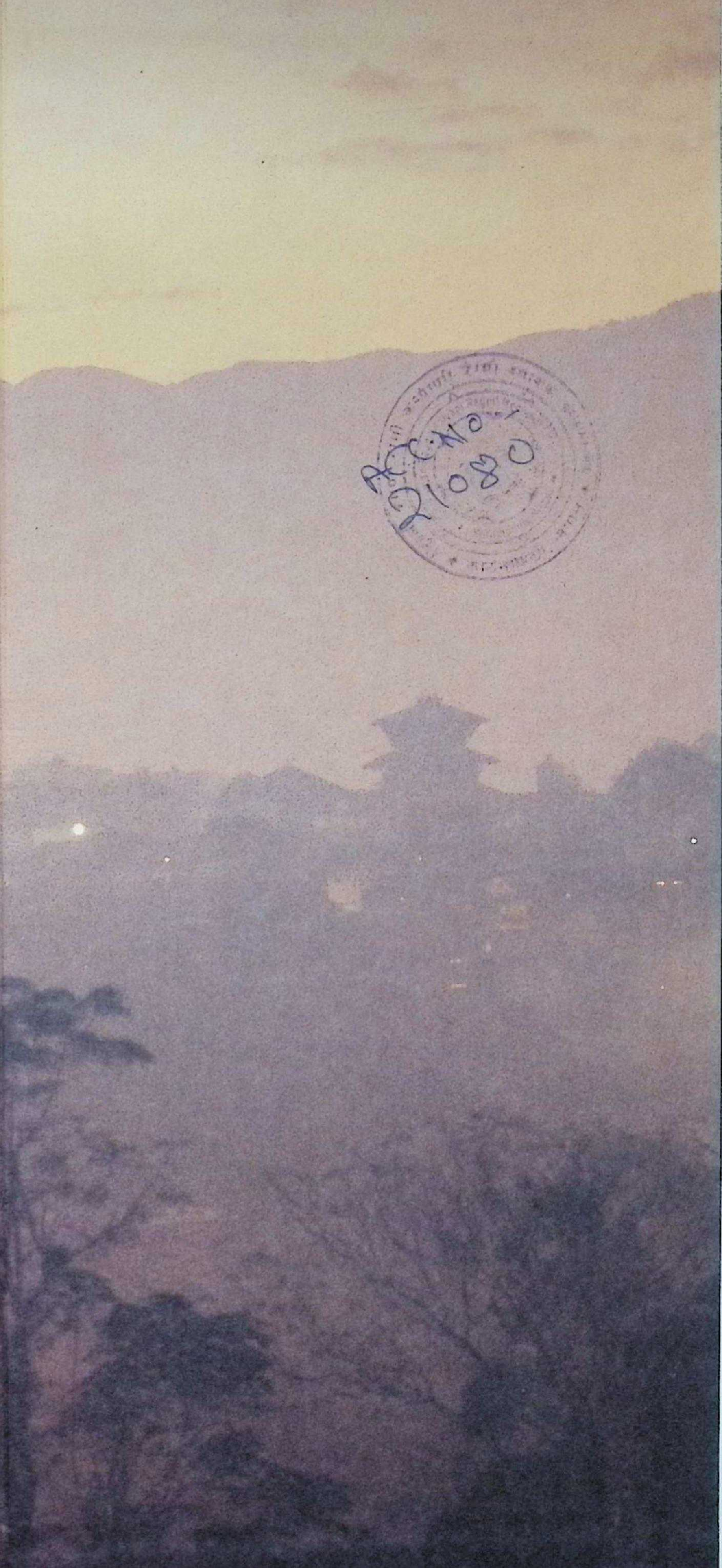

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Grandson of the last Rana Maharajah, Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana was born to the late General Bijaya Shumshere J.B. Rana and Rani Sarala Devi on May 7, 1941. He studied for over ten years in England, graduating from New College, Oxford in 1963 with a P.P.E. degree.

Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Home Panchayat during 1965-1967, Director of Nepal Bank Ltd. during 1966-1973 and also of Nepal Rastra Bank during 1973-1975, a Member of the National Development Council during 1969-1976, and the founding Executive Director of the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) during 1969-1973, Mr Rana has been continuously elected as Member of the National Panchayat (the Nepalese Parliament) ever since 1973, when he entered politics.

In a long and distinguished ministerial career, he has been in charge of half the ministries in the Cabinet, including long stints in Water Resources, Panchayat and Local Development, and Education and Culture.

Mr Rana led the Nepalese delegation to the 20th UNESCO General Conference (Paris, 1978), where he launched the appeal for the preservation of the monuments of the Kathmandu Valley and got them placed on the World Heritage list.

A well-known writer, he has contributed numerous articles in national and international journals. Of particular note amongst his publications is *Nepal in Perspective* (Kathmandu: CEDA, 1973).